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A  
SELECT SERIES,  
BIOGRAPHICAL, NARRATIVE,  
EPISTOLARY,  
AND  
MISCELLANEOUS:  
CHIEFLY THE PRODUCTIONS OF  
EARLY MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS:  
INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE  
THE  
SPIRITUAL CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

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EDITED BY  
JOHN BARCLAY.

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*The kingdom of God is not in word but in power.—1 COR. IV. 20.*

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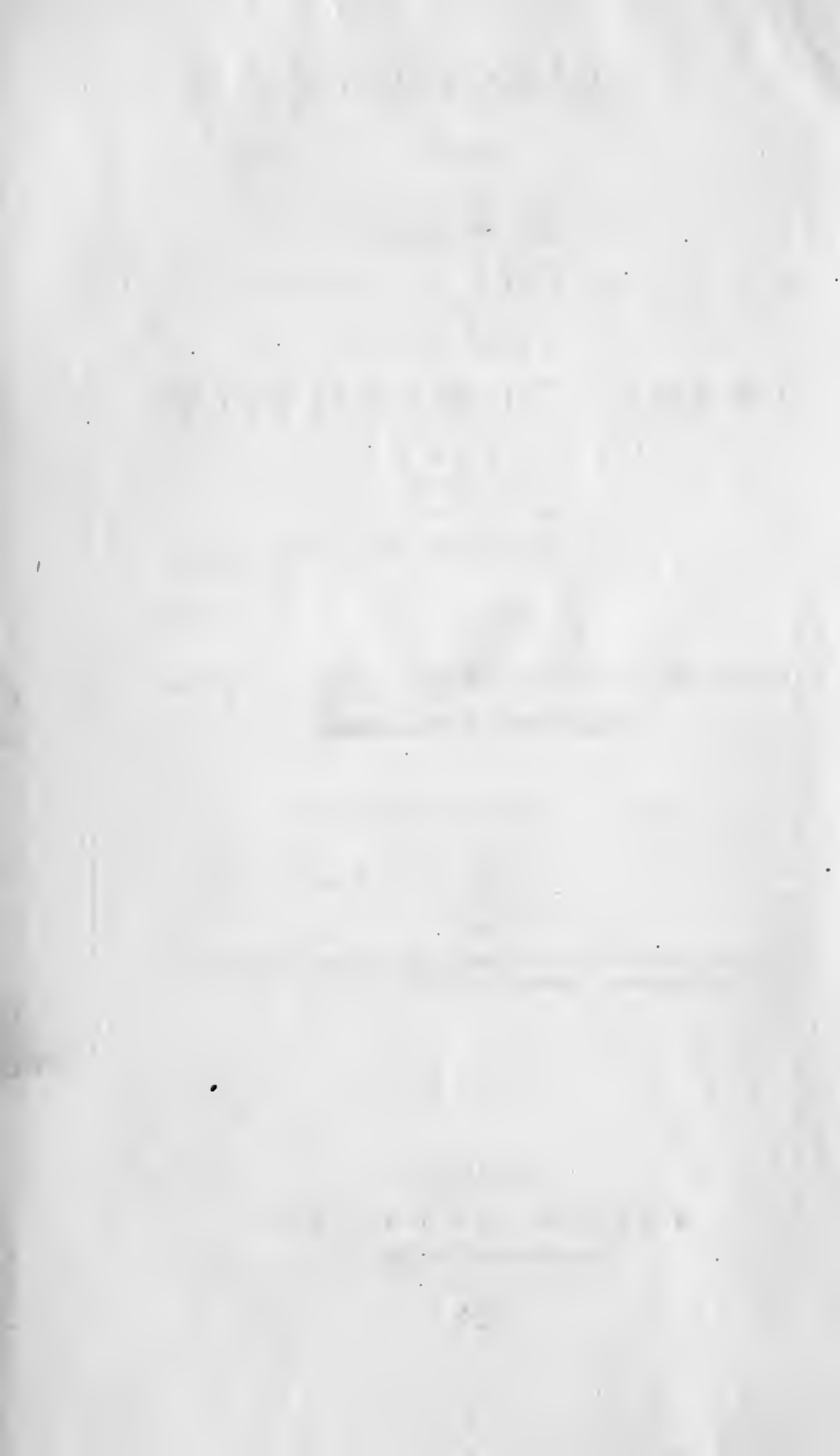
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LONDON:  
DARTON AND HARVEY,  
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# SELECTIONS

FROM

THE WORKS

OF

ISAAC PENINGTON;

ELDEST SON OF

ALDERMAN PENINGTON OF LONDON,

AND AN

EMINENT MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN THE  
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,

WHICH HE JOINED ABOUT THE YEAR 1658.

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They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.—*Isaiah*, xxix. 24.

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## PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

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THE Editor of this little volume is entirely persuaded, that PENINGTON, as well with regard to his precepts and principles as his blessed example among men, “ *being dead, yet speaketh* ;” and most intelligibly and naturally to that community, unto whom beyond any other, he was so intimately united in religious fellowship. Nevertheless, before allowing him his just liberty to speak for himself in the ensuing Selections from his published Works, it may be proper on the present occasion to interpose a few remarks ; both by way of information to those who have hitherto been unacquainted with the Author, and by way of putting in remembrance the brethren of the same household of faith concerning those things, which have been wrought in God by the instrumentality of this one of their elders in the Truth.

“Memoirs of the Life of Isaac Penington by Joseph Gurney Bevan,” are pretty generally known to the Society of Friends ; a second edition was printed in 1830, and is to be had of the publishers of the present volume. The “Letters of Isaac Penington,” which were laid before the public in

1829, likewise had an extensive circulation among Friends, and have been found refreshing to the souls of many not of that particular fold, a second edition being called for only a few months after the first had issued from the press. These Letters very feelingly and fully evince the enlarged experience and conspicuous standing of the writer, among those that have walked with God by faith, and were redeemed from the earth as followers of the Lamb. In that volume, some brief notice was given of the man, his character and walk in life, his services and sufferings for the gospel's sake, and by one well qualified to bear him witness in these respects, William Penn. It is now again out of print; and on that account it may be the more expedient, in connexion with the present publication, at the close of these Preliminary Remarks, to subjoin a further testimony to his memory, inscribed by his filial friend, Thomas Ellwood, the companion of Milton,—and the rather, as it contains Penington's *own relation* of his spiritual exercises in joining the then despised people called Quakers.

His collected Works have been successively printed in one volume folio, 1681, two vols. quarto, 1761, and the last edition in 1784, being four vols. octavo, from which the present Selection is compiled, and to which the references are uniformly made. They originally came out in the shape of separate treatises, written at different times and on

various occasions, nearly all of them being intended for the more strict and serious classes of that day. The first of these appeared the same year in which he was united with Friends, namely, 1658, and is entitled, "The Way of Life and Death made manifest and set before Men," &c. He was then about forty-two years of age, and had been at times for ten years before engaged as an author on religious topics, being for a part of that period in connexion with the Independents.

By all that we can gather, he was gifted with an unusual judgment in divine things, serene, extensive, unclouded; his piety too was in a distinguished degree well-tempered and chastened, so that it might indeed be fitly said of him by William Penn, he was "zealous, yet tender; wise, yet humble," being truly watchful and discreet in each action and expression of his life. With natural abilities beyond many, and having had, as the same writer asserts, "all the advantages the schools and universities of his own country could give him, joined with the conversation of some of the most knowing and considerable men of that time," it was likely that his career in the Society of Friends, extending as it did over the space of twenty years, should give him ample opportunity of observation, both with regard to the genuine tendency and effects of their principles, and the opposite opinions and animadversions that were so freely passed

upon them. He had himself been brought through a sorely heavy, protracted series of conflict, in his search after Truth and peace, had known not a little of “the terrors of the Lord,” and his judgments, which are said to be “a great deep;” on this account he was proportionally qualified to open the wonderful deliverances, rest, and consolation provided in Christ Jesus for his dependent disciples, as well as to explain the conditions and the characteristics of the gospel. To use the expressions of William Penn, “His peculiar and mighty love was to the great professors of this nation, whom carnal apprehensions or unjust prejudices have hindered from closing with the blessed Truth, as it is known and felt amongst us; and his fervent labour to remove those obstructions was with such tenderness, yet great clearness, that I may venture to style him their apostle: for as in almost every meeting, so in every book, the bent of his spirit was towards them,—that those who made a more than ordinary profession of God, not without some [previous] touches of the divine grace, and experience of his visitation, though much extinguished with human and worldly mixtures, might come to know, *what that was they once tasted*, how they lost it, and which is the way to recover the living and full enjoyment of it, even the inward knockings and appearance of Jesus the Saviour, to the salvation of their souls.” He adds,



“I pray God, they may answer his love, for he was much spent on their accounts; that so, his ministry, writings, travels, and tears, may not be matter of charge and evidence against them in the day of their judgment.”

Some few of Penington's writings are controversial. The remark of his judicious biographer, Joseph Gurney Bevan, respecting one of these, (“An Examination of the Grounds,” &c.) is perhaps still more applicable to the rest:—“I take this to be a choice piece, and far from being useless now or at any time, because the immediate cause of its publication is done away. The reader will find in it some able defence and elucidation of the principles of Friends.” They are all of an edifying, experimental, and discriminating character, indited in a most tender, loving spirit, at the same time they plainly and unflinchingly lay open the errors of his opponents, with the various transformations and subtle devices of Satan. One or two of these tracts in particular, the Editor thinks fit strongly to recommend to notice in the present day, as being calculated, in an especial manner, to meet the objections and doubts some have of late entertained as to the soundness of our religious views, and the scriptural ground on which they stand; the first, containing a review of many such objections, is to be found at p. 233, of vol. iii. under the title of “The Holy Truth and people

Defended ;" another, only in part mentioned in the Table of Contents to his works, has no proper title affixed, but embraces a variety of subjects, extending from p. 207 of vol. iv. to p. 250.

Here it seems requisite—in consequence of the bold as well as unfair attempts that have again and again been made to render Penington, as well as his fellow-labourers of that day, guilty of denying or lowering the Divine character and offices of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—to refer to a passage occurring in these Selections at p. 266, which, among many others, may serve strongly to mark his unfeigned and full appreciation of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God without the gates of Jerusalem for our redemption; as also to introduce in this place an extract from his works, setting forth *his own entire conviction with regard to the faith of the earliest members of our Society.*—"I have had," says he, "experience of that despised people for many years; and I have often heard them (even the ancient ones of them) own Christ both inwardly and outwardly. Yea, I heard one of the ancients of them thus testify, in a public meeting many years since, That if Christ had not come in the flesh, in the fulness of time, to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, and to offer himself up a sacrifice for mankind, all mankind had utterly perished. What cause, then, have we to praise the Lord God, for sending his

Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for what his Son did therein.—*Works*, vol. iii. p. 403.

There are also some other highly important sentiments, contained in “A Brief Account concerning the People called Quakers,” &c. at p. 419 of the same volume: they exhibit in clear and pointed terms the position, which our Society and its true advocates have ever professed to stand upon from its first dawning, and are therefore peculiarly desirable to be brought forward (though at some length) in an Introduction to a work of the present description.

“We are a people of God’s gathering, who (many of us) had long waited for his appearance, and had undergone great distress for want thereof.

*Quest.* But some may say, What appearance of the great God and Saviour did ye want?

*Ans.* We wanted the presence and power of his Spirit to be inwardly manifested in our spirits. We had (as I may say) what we could gather from the letter, and endeavoured to practise what we could read in the letter; but we wanted the power from on high, we wanted life, we wanted the presence and fellowship of our Beloved, we wanted the knowledge of the heavenly seed and kingdom, and an entrance into it, and the holy dominion and reign of the Lord of life over the flesh, over sin and death in us.

Q. How did God appear to you?

A. The Sun of righteousness did arise in us, the day-spring from on high, the morning-star did visit us, insomuch that we did as really see and feel the light and brightness of the inward day in our spirits, as ever we felt the darkness of the inward night.

Q. How did God gather you?

A. By the voice of his Son, by the arm of his Son, by the virtue of his Son's light and life inwardly revealed and working in our hearts. This loosed us inwardly from the darkness, from the bonds of sin and iniquity, from the power of the captiver and destroyer, and turned our minds inwardly towards our Lord and Saviour, to mind his inward appearance, his inward shinings, his inward quickenings; all which were fresh from God, and full of virtue. And as we came to be sensible of them, join to them, receive and give up to them, we came to partake of their virtue, and to witness the rescuing and redeeming of our souls thereby. So that, by hearing the Son's voice, and following him, we came to find him the way to the Father, and to be gathered home by him to the Father's house, where is bread enough, and mansions of rest and peace for all the children of the Most High.

Now, as touching the blessed principle of truth, which we have had experience of, and testify to, (for how can we conceal so rich a treasure, and be faithful to God, or bear true good-will to men!) it is no new thing in itself, though of late more clearly revealed, and the minds of men more clearly directed and guided to it than in former ages. It is no other than that which Christ himself abundantly preached, who preached the kingdom, who preached the truth which makes free, and that under many parables and resemblances; sometimes of a little seed, sometimes of a pearl or hid treasure, sometimes of a leaven or salt, sometimes of a lost piece of silver, &c.—So that we testify to no new thing, but to the truth and grace which was from the beginning; which was always in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, and dispensed by him in all ages and generations; whereby he quickened, renewed, and changed the heart of the true believers in his inward and spiritual appearance in them, thereby destroying the enemies of his own house, and saving them from them. For indeed, there is no saving the

creature, without destroying that in the creature, which brings spiritual death and destruction upon it.—

And as touching doctrines, we have no new doctrines to hold forth. The doctrines held forth in the holy Scriptures are the doctrines that we believe. And this doth further seal to us our belief of this principle, because we find it a key by which God openeth the Scriptures to us, and giveth us the living sense and evidence of them in our hearts.—So that, what should we publish any new faith, or any new doctrines for? Indeed, we have none to publish; but all our aim is to bring men to the ancient principle of truth, and to the right understanding and practice of the ancient apostolic doctrine and holy faith once delivered to the saints. Head-notions do but cause disputes; but heart-knowledge, heart-experience, sense of the living power of God inwardly, the evidence and demonstration of his Spirit in the inward parts, puts an end to disputes, and puts men upon the inward travel and exercise of spirit by that which is new and living, which avails with God.

Now, whereas many are offended at us, because we do not more preach doctrinal points, or the history of Christ, as touching his death, resurrection, ascension, &c.; but our declaration and testimony is chiefly concerning a principle to direct and guide men's minds thereto; to give a plain account of this thing, as it pleaseth the Lord to open my heart at this time in love and good-will to satisfy and remove prejudices where it may be; thus it is in brief.

First, That which God hath given us the experience of, (after our great loss in the literal knowledge of things,) and that which he hath given us to testify of, is the mystery, the hidden life, the inward and spiritual appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, revealing his power inwardly, destroying enemies inwardly, and working his work inwardly in the heart. Oh! this was the joyful sound to our souls, even the tidings of the arising of that inward life and power

which could do this! Now, this spiritual appearance of his was after his appearance in the flesh, and is the standing and lasting dispensation of the gospel, even the appearance of Christ in his Spirit and power inwardly in the hearts of his. So that, in minding this, and being faithful in this respect, we mind our peculiar work, and are faithful in that which God hath peculiarly called us to, and requireth of us.

Secondly, There is not that need of publishing the other, as formerly was. The historical relation concerning Christ, is generally believed and received by all sorts that pretend to Christianity. His death, his miracles, his rising, his ascending, his interceding, &c. is generally believed by all people; but the mystery they miss of, the hidden life they are not acquainted with, but alienated from the life of God, in the midst of their literal owning and acknowledging of these things.

Thirdly, The knowledge of these, without the knowledge of the mystery, is not sufficient to bring them unto God; for many set up that which they gather and comprehend from the relation concerning the thing, instead of the thing itself, and so never come to a sense of their need of the thing itself, nay, not so far as rightly to seek after it. And so, many are builders, and many are built up very high in religion, in a way of notion and practice, without acquaintance with the Rock of ages, without the true knowledge and understanding of the Foundation and Corner-stone. My meaning is, they have a notion of Christ to be the rock, a notion of him to be the foundation-stone; but never come livingly to feel him the rock, to feel him the foundation-stone, inwardly laid in their hearts, and themselves made living stones in him, and built upon him, the main and fundamental stone. Where is this to be felt, but within? And they that feel this within, do they not feel Christ within? And can any that feel him within, deny him to be within the strength of life, the hope of glory? Well, it is true once again, (spi-

ritually now, as well as formerly literally,) “the stone which the builders refused” (Christ within, the builders of this age refuse) “is become the head of the corner,” who knits together his sanctified body, his living body, the church, in this our day, more gloriously than in the former ages and generations, blessed be the name of our God.

Fourthly, The mystery, the hidden life, the appearance of Christ in Spirit, comprehends the other: and the other is not lost or denied, but found in it, and there discerned or acknowledged more clearly and abundantly. It was to be after it, and comprehends that which went before it. Paul did not lose any thing of the excellent knowledge of Christ, when he said, “Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more.” If he did not know Christ after the flesh, how did he know him? Why, as the Father inwardly revealed him. He knew him in his Spirit and power. He knew his death inwardly, he knew his resurrection inwardly, he knew the Spirit, the virtue, the power of it inwardly; he knew the thing in the mystery in his own heart. Oh, precious knowledge! Oh, the excellency of this knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! What is the outwardly most exact literal knowledge without this? But what then? Do I now deny or slight the outward? No; I have it here, and I have the inward feeling of the Spirit of life, how it dwelt in him, how it wrought in him, and of what wonderful value all his actions and obedience were, in and through the virtue of this Spirit? Was Abraham’s offering his son so precious in God’s eye? Oh, then, what is this! Never was such a body, so sanctified, so prepared; never such a sacrifice offered. Oh, the infinite worth and value of it! For by the inward life and teachings of God’s Spirit am I taught and made able to value that glorious outward appearance and manifestation of the

life and power of God in that heavenly flesh, (as in my heart I have often called it) for the life so to dwell in it, that it was even one with it."

Thus much it appeared expedient to premise, in reference to the ensuing Selections: a few other matters still remain to be touched upon. The task of selecting has been found, (as the Editor of a similar publication, printed in 1818, at New Bedford, in North America, observes,) not unattended with difficulties. Between pieces of similar import, and of almost equal strength and clearness, it was not easy to decide; and of course it is very possible, as the same Friend expresses himself, that many to whom the Works are familiar, may be disposed to think that a different choice would have been preferable. As a proof of this, the American edition has by no means been followed in the present instance, although some use has been made of that volume in the preparation of the present one. Had the plan been to cull "*the beauties*" of Penington in mere quotations or short disjointed extracts, embracing the general topics of Christian faith and practice, this would have involved a very different arrangement. But the object in view was, rather, to divest the Works of that which could advantageously be dispensed with, retaining some of the most experimental and edifying of those smaller pieces which might suitably be detached, without doing injury to the Au-



thor's intentions. In a few cases, a paragraph or more has been introduced from another treatise, where the subject seemed likely to be evidently helped by further illustration, and then it is marked out to notice by brackets, and the proper reference given to the place whence it is taken. In other instances, some abridgment has been thought needful; but no censure of the parts that are left out is hereby intended. Indeed, the Editor can fully join with his American brother-Editor in the hope, that those who may derive instruction from what is here presented, will be thereby "induced to take up the original work, where they will find much that has strong claims upon the attention of every thoughtful and inquiring mind." And he also feelingly concurs with that Editor and with J. G. Bevan in the further observation, that, in reference especially to some of these writings, embracing as they do deeply spiritual views, and evincing large experience in what the Scriptures term "the mystery of Christ" and "of the kingdom of God," "the mystery of his will," "the mystery of the faith," "the mystery of godliness" and "of iniquity," the succeeding cautionary advice of Penington to his reader is highly appropriate:—  
"He that readeth these things, let him not strive to comprehend them; but be content with what he feeleth thereof suitable to his own present estate: and as the life grows in him and he in the life,

and he comes to meet with the things and exercises spoken of, the words and experiences concerning them will of themselves open to him, and be useful and serviceable to him so far as the Lord pleaseth ; he keeping to the leadings, savour, and principle of life in himself, wherein alone his knowledge, sight, growth, and experiences are safe."

With the foregoing sentence, it might be desirable to close these Preliminary Remarks, but that the Editor feels inclined to offer in addition that which follows.

Some readers *on the one hand* may be even disposed, as the translator of Thomas à Kempis intimates, to despise and exclaim against books of this description, as the ravings of enthusiasm or the dreams of fancy, "because they call men to the renunciation of the world, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer, and to a continual unreserved dependence upon the illuminating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit." With regard to such persons, however high may be their profession, however full their verbal acknowledgment of certain truths of the gospel, it is evident, that "*on the pretence*" (as Chalmers says, in his introductory essay to that work,) "*of magnifying a most essential doctrine,*" (that which relates to a sinner's forgiveness,) and with a view to avoid certain tendencies to error, they have, as he expresses it,

*“ in fact diffused a mist over the whole field of revelation;”* and not only so, but are in danger of utterly vitiating their own interest in that eternal salvation purchased for us by Christ, in so far as they are slighting and virtually setting aside that process of regeneration, by which alone we can see or understand the things of his kingdom here, or have any true hope of an entrance therein, either here or hereafter.

“ Wisdom,” however, (we read,) “ is justified of her children,” and it must be confessed, of few beside. But, among this far more numerous class of the readers of Isaac Penington, who *on the other hand* can and do most cordially appreciate his testimony, there may still be even a tendency to overvalue the instrument, through whom they have been so often and so deeply instructed. Yet this can never be said to be the legitimate effect of any one of his writings: on the contrary, everything in them is calculated to reprove such a disposition, and to centre the mind far above men or books, even in that Supreme Source of all grace and glory and goodness, by which alone such as he were what they were.

In conclusion, then, may Penington's own words in this respect be fastened on every mind.—“ If the Lord please to smite any one's earthly wisdom and comprehension, and give him the feeling of anything here written, let him in fear acknowledge

the Lord, sacrificing to his goodness, and waiting upon him to be kept in that feeling ; not magnifying or vilifying any of his instruments, but in meekness and humility embracing the instructions of the Almighty, from the hand by which he pleaseth to give them forth. As for me, I am but a shell : and if this party knew me who sets me up so high, preferring me above many whom the Lord hath preferred far above me, he would soon acknowledge me to be a poor, weak, contemptible one. Yet, this I must by no means deny, that the pure liquor of the eternal life at its pleasure springeth up and issueth out through me ; though I can also in true understanding say, that it issueth out far oftener and much more abundantly through others. Let it have its honour wherever it appears ! and the Lord bring down that in people's hearts, which hindereth the owning and receiving of its virtue."

JOHN BARCLAY.

Stoke Newington,  
3rd Month, 1837.

THE  
TESTIMONY OF THOMAS ELLWOOD,  
CONCERNING  
ISAAC PENINGTON.

PREFIXED TO HIS COLLECTED WORKS.

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ALTHOUGH I am not ignorant, that many weighty and living testimonies have been already given in by true and faithful witnesses upon the same occasion, which might well seem sufficient to excuse mine; yet am I not thereby clear, but find a pressure upon my spirit to write a few lines also concerning this my dear deceased friend; to which, I confess, I am induced, and in some sort engaged, by the double obligation of affection and gratitude. Love him I did, and that entirely, and sure I am very deservedly; for he was worthy indeed of love from all men, but more especially from me, to whom he had been abundantly kind: for, in the day wherein it pleased the Lord to awaken my soul, and call me out of the pollutions of the world, with respect alike to worship and conversation, (for which I became the derision of my country, the scorn and contempt of my familiars and acquaint-

ance, and in a manner an outcast also, exposed as it were in the world to shift in it,) how welcome was I then to him! how affectionately did he receive me! how regardfully did he take care of me! how tenderly and like a father did he watch over me, that I might not be drawn back, or any way be betrayed from the simplicity of Truth, as I had received it! And can I ever forget his love, or let his manifold kindness slip out of my mind! Oh, no! the remembrance of him is pleasant to me, and I think not of him without delight: for, as a friend, I truly loved him; as a father, (for such his care of me rendered him to me,) I revered him; as an elder, I honoured him, and that (as he right well deserved) with double honour. My spirit was truly united to his; yea, my soul was linked and knit unto him in the holy covenant of life, which death hath not been able to dissolve. Bear with me therefore a little, I entreat thee, whoever thou art, under whose eye these lines may chance to fall, if I take liberty to express my sense of this my beloved friend; wherein, if I seem somewhat particular, know that my acquaintance with him was so.

He was naturally furnished with a sharp and excellent wit, and that well cultivated and polished with an ingenuous and liberal education; his disposition was courteous and affable, free from pride and affectation. His ordinary discourse cheerful and pleasant, neither morose nor light, but innocently sweet, and tempered with such a serious gravity, as rendered his converse both delightful and profitable.

From his childhood (as I have heard him occasionally say) he was religiously inclined, and sought the Lord in his tender years. And although the way of Truth was not then so cast up unto him, as since, through the goodness of the Lord, it was; yet that he

had then, at times, some true touches and tastes of life, some openings and sights of heavenly things, (though not so clear, unmixed, and abiding as after) the treatises which he then wrote do manifestly declare. And albeit, at the first manifestation of Truth unto him in this present dispensation, he was not without doubts and jealousies concerning it, as himself relates; nor free for some time from disputes and reasonings against the meanness of its appearance, yet, after it pleased the Father, in the riches of his grace, to reveal his Son in him, thereby giving him to see, and certainly to know, what was that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; O how joyfully did he receive it! how willingly did he bow unto it! how readily did he yield his neck to the yoke of Christ! and how constantly and delightfully did he wear it! Did he then regard the pleasures of the times, or value the preferments and honours of the world, though living at that time in the favour and affluence of it? No, no: he turned his back upon it all; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; and casting down his crown at the foot of Jesus, he willingly became a fool to the world, and to the wisdom thereof, that he might be made truly wise to God. And surely he obtained his desire herein; for as he honoured the Lord, and preferred him above all; so the Lord did highly honour him, and gave him liberally of the true and heavenly wisdom, adorned with humility; so that he was learned, and yet humble; full of knowledge, heavenly knowledge, yet not puffed up thereby. And as he had freely received of the Lord, so did he freely and readily communicate thereof (as the following sheets do witness) unto such as stood in need of counsel, advice, information, or direction in their travel to the heavenly country. To which service he was

fitted and very well furnished by the experiences of his own travel; for the Lord had led him through many a strait and difficulty; through many temptations, trials, and exercises, by which he had tried and proved him. Not only through the Red Sea and the Wilderness [spiritually] had he passed, but the bottom of Jordan also had he seen, and the upholding delivering arm of the Lord through all had he known and felt; whereby he was able to speak a word of information to the bewildered passenger; a word of encouragement to the weary and fainting traveller; a word of comfort to the afflicted soul, and of consolation to the wounded spirit. And O! how sweetly have I heard it flow from him! How has it dropped like the dew, and distilled like the gentle rain! Ah! how tender, how compassionate, how full of bowels and feeling sympathy was he! Surely his words have been many times as apples of gold in pictures of silver. For, of a truth, the Lord was with him, and his heavenly power did often fill his temple; and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, and the fruits thereof were plentifully brought forth through him, in love, in joy, in peace, in long-suffering, in gentleness, in goodness, in faith, in meekness, and in temperance; so richly did the word of the Lord dwell in him. His delight was in the service of God, to which he was wholly given up, and in it spent most of his time, either publicly in meetings waiting upon God, or privately in visiting and ministering unto those that were distressed, or any way afflicted in mind or body; and when at home, he was frequent in retirements, and very inward with the Lord. Very fervent he was in prayer, and very frequent; for, the Spirit of grace and supplication was plentifully poured upon him, by which he often wrestled with the Lord, and not in



vain. *The Holy Scriptures he read much, and with great delight and profit: for he made it not a cursory or formal business, nor sought to pick out the meaning by his natural wit or learning; but, with a great composedness of mind, and reverence of spirit, waited to receive the true sense of them from the openings of that divine Spirit, by which the penmen of them were inspired.* Great and strong was the travail of his spirit for the conversion of others; and in a more especial manner did his love flow and bowels yearn after the professors of religion, for whom he continually and earnestly laboured, both by word and writing, not ceasing to seek them to his dying day, that they might be brought off from the shadows, and come at length to inherit substance. And, blessed be the Lord! by the powerful operation of the Spirit of God, through his ministry, many were turned to the Truth, and many confirmed in it: for the Lord was with him, and spake by him; so that his teaching was with divine authority, in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. To the world, and the affairs of it, he was very much a stranger; but deeply experienced in the things of God: for his affection being set on things above, his conversation was in heaven, and his life hid with Christ in God. He was but a pilgrim on the earth, and is now gone home. In his family, he was a true pattern of goodness and piety; not only by his grave example, but by his savoury instructions and exhortations to godliness. To his wife, he was a most affectionate husband; to his children, a loving and tender father; to his servants, a mild and gentle master; to his friends, a firm and fast friend; to the poor, compassionate and open-hearted; and to all, courteous and kind. Very zealous he was for the truth; unwearied in promoting it, bold and undaunted

in the defence of it, faithful in his testimony to it, patient and cheerful in his suffering for it. A right good and pious man, indeed, was he; one that truly feared God, and warily eschewed evil.

How great and various his exercises were in the times of his former professions; how earnest and pressing his spirit then was after the pure enjoyment of God; how strange and admirable the dealings of the Lord were with him; and how far he came at length to see the travail of his soul, and to be satisfied; as himself of all men best knew; so he hath occasionally scattered here and there a hint thereof, in several pieces of the following books: which, for the reader's satisfaction, I had once thought to have collected and presented here together; but finding, amongst his loose papers, a summary account thereof, written with his own hand, above a dozen years ago, when being in bonds for Christ's sake, he was sick near unto death, I choose rather to transcribe that hither, and refer the more curious and industrious reader to the several books and papers of the ensuing volumes, wherein he hath touched the same subject; as namely, "The Way of Life and Death," &c. in the preface, and in the postscript. "Babylon the Great described," &c. "The scattered Sheep," &c. "An Examination of the Grounds," &c. and "A Glass for Professors." "Where is the Wise?" "Observations on Rom. xiv. 20." "Of the Church in its first and purest State." "The holy Truth and People defended."

Not to enumerate each particular, the account he gives of his spiritual travel is as followeth:

"A true and faithful relation, in brief, concerning myself, in reference to my spiritual travels, and the Lord's dealings with me. I say true and faithful, because it is of the Truth, and not given forth in my own

will, but in the Lord's will and requirings of me at this time, for his service.

“ I have been a man of sorrow and affliction from my childhood, feeling the want of the Lord, and mourning after him: separated by him from the love, nature, and spirit of this world, and turned in spirit towards him, almost ever since I could remember.

“ In the sense of my lost estate, I sought after the Lord; I read the Scriptures; I watched over mine own heart; I cried unto the Lord for what I felt the want of; I blessed his name in what he mercifully did for me, and bestowed on me, &c. Whatever I read in the Scriptures as the way of God to my understanding, I gave myself to the faithful practice of; being contented to meet with all the reproach, opposition, and several kinds of sufferings, which it pleased the Lord to measure out to me therein. And I cannot but say, that the Lord was good unto me, did visit me, did teach me, did help me, did testify his acceptance of me many times, to the refreshing and joy of my heart before him.

“ But my soul was not satisfied with what I met with, nor indeed could be, there being further quickenings and pressings in my spirit, after a more full, certain, and satisfactory knowledge; even after the sense, sight, and enjoyment of God, as was testified in the Scriptures to have been felt and enjoyed in the former times: for I saw plainly, that there was a stop of the streams, and a great falling short of the power, life, and glory which they partook of. We had not so the Spirit, nor were so in the faith, nor did so walk and live in God, as they did. They were come to mount Zion, and the heavenly Jerusalem, &c. which we had hardly so much as the literal knowledge or apprehension what they were. So that, I saw the whole course of religion among us was, for the most part, but

a talk, to what they felt, enjoyed, possessed, and lived in.

“This sense made me sick at heart indeed, and set me upon deep crying to God, close searching the Scriptures, and waiting on God, that I might receive the pure sense and understanding of them from and in the light, and by the help of his Spirit. And what the Lord did bestow on me in that state, with thankfulness I remember before him at this very day: for he was then my God, and a pitier and a watcher over me; though he had not pleased then to direct me how to stay my mind upon him. And then I was led (indeed I was led, I did not run of myself) into a way of separation from the worship of the world into a gathered society: for this both the Scripture and the Spirit of God in me gave testimony unto; and what we then met with, and what leadings and help we then felt, there is a remembrance and testimony in my heart to this day. But there was somewhat wanting, and we mistook our way: for, whereas we should have pressed forward into the spirit and power, we ran too much outward into the letter and form: and though the Lord in many things helped us, yet therein he was against us, and brought darkness, confusion, and scattering upon us. I was sorely broken and darkened, and in this darkened state sometimes lay still for a long season, secretly mourning and crying out to the Lord night and day. Sometimes I ran about, hearkening after what might appear or break forth in others; but never met with anything whereto there was the least answer in my heart, save in one people, who had a touch of Truth; but I never expressed so much to any of them, nor indeed felt them at all able to reach my condition.

“At last, after all my distresses, wanderings, and sore travels, I met with some of the writings of this peo-

ple called Quakers, which I cast a slight eye upon and disdained, as falling very short of that wisdom, light, life, and power, which I had been longing for, and searching after. I had likewise, some pretty distance of time after this, opportunity of meeting with some of them; and divers of them were by the Lord moved (I know it to be so since) to come to me. As I remember, at the very first, they reached to the life of God in me, which life answered their voice, and caused a great love in me to spring to them; but still in my reasonings with them, and disputes alone in my mind concerning them, I was very far off from owning them, as so knowing the Lord, or so appearing in his life and power as my condition needed, and as my soul waited for. Yea, the more I conversed with them, the more I seemed in my understanding and reason to get over them, and to trample them under my feet, as a poor, weak, silly, contemptible generation, who had some smatterings of Truth in them, and some honest desires towards God; but very far off from the clear and full understanding of his way and will. And this was the effect of almost every discourse with them; they still reached my heart, and I felt them in the secrets of my soul; which caused the love in me always to continue, yea, sometimes to increase towards them: but daily my understanding got more and more over them, and therein I daily more and more despised them.

“After a long time, I was invited to hear one of them (as I had been often, they in tender love pitying me, and feeling my want of that which they possessed;) and there was an answer in my heart, and I went with fear and trembling, with desires to the Most High, who was over all, and knew all, that I might not receive anything for truth which was not of him, nor withstand anything which was of him; but might

bow before the appearance of the Lord my God, and none other. And indeed, when I came, I felt the presence and power of the Most High among them, and words of truth from the Spirit of truth reaching to my heart and conscience, opening my state as in the presence of the Lord. Yea, I did not only feel words and demonstrations from without, but I felt the dead quickened, the seed raised; insomuch that my heart, in the certainty of light, and clearness of true sense, said, *This is He, this is He, there is no other: this is He whom I have waited for and sought after from my childhood; who was always near me, and had often begotten life in my heart; but I knew him not distinctly, nor how to receive him, or dwell with him.* And then, in this sense, in the melting and breakings of my spirit, was I given up to the Lord, to become his, both in waiting for the further revealing of his seed in me, and to serve him in the life and power of his seed.

“ Now, what I met with after this, in my travels, in my waitings, in my spiritual exercises, is not to be uttered: only in general I may say this, I met with the very strength of hell. The cruel oppressor roared upon me, and made me feel the bitterness of his captivity, while he had any power: yea, the Lord was far from my help, and from the voice of my roaring. I also met with deep subtleties and devices to entangle me in that wisdom, which seemeth able to make wise in the things of God, but indeed is foolishness, and a snare to the soul, bringing it back into captivity, where the enemy's gins prevail. And what I met with outwardly from my own dear father, from my kindred, from my servants, from the people and powers of the world, for no other cause but fearing my God, worshipping him as he hath required of me, and bowing to his Seed, which is his Son, who is to be worship-

ped by men and angels for evermore, the Lord my God knoweth, before whom my heart and ways are ; who preserved me in love to them, in the midst of all I suffered from them, and doth still so preserve me ; blessed be his pure and holy name.

“ But some may desire to know what I have at last met with ? I answer, *I have met with the Seed*. Understand that word, and thou wilt be satisfied, and inquire no further. I have met with my God ; I have met with my Saviour ; and he hath not been present with me without his salvation ; but I have felt the healings drop upon my soul from under his wings. I have met with the true knowledge, the knowledge of life, the living knowledge, the knowledge which is life ; and this hath had the true virtue in it, which my soul hath rejoiced in, in the presence of the Lord. I have met with the Seed’s Father, and in the Seed I have felt him my Father.<sup>1</sup> There I have read his nature, his love, his compassions, his tenderness, which have melted, overcome, and changed my heart before him. I have met with the Seed’s faith, which hath done and doth that which the faith of man can never do. I have met with the true birth, with the birth which is heir of the kingdom, and inherits the kingdom. I have met with the true spirit of prayer and supplication, wherein the Lord is prevailed with, and which draws from him whatever the condition needs ; the soul always looking up to him in the will, and in the

<sup>1</sup> One of the descriptive figures applied by the Apostle Peter to “ the Word of God,” of which we are to be “ born again,” and which “ liveth and abideth for ever,” is “ *incorruptible Seed*,” 1 Peter, i. 23. And the Apostle John saith of him who is born of God, that “ *His Seed*” (the Seed of God) “ remaineth in him,” 1 John, iii. 9. Thus also, the Apostle Paul declares Christ to be “ formed in” believers, Gal. iv. 19. *Editor.*

time and way, which is acceptable with him. What shall I say? I have met with the true peace, the true righteousness, the true holiness, the true rest of the soul, the everlasting habitation, which the redeemed dwell in: and I know all these to be true, in Him that is true, and am capable of no doubt, dispute, or reasoning in my mind about them; it abiding there, where it hath received the full assurance and satisfaction. And also I know very well and distinctly in spirit where the doubts and disputes are, and where the certainty and full assurance is, and in the tender mercy of the Lord am preserved out of the one, and in the other.

“Now, the Lord knows, these things I do not utter in a boasting way; but would rather be speaking of my nothingness, my emptiness, my weakness, my manifold infirmities, which I feel more than ever. The Lord hath broken the man’s part in me, and I am a worm, and no man before him. I have no strength to do any good or service for him: nay, I cannot watch over or preserve myself. I feel daily that I keep not alive my own soul; but am weaker before men, yea, weaker in my spirit, as in myself, than ever I have been. But I cannot but utter to the praise of my God, and I feel his arm stretched out for me; and my weakness, which I feel in myself, is not my loss, but advantage before him. And these things I write, as having no end at all therein of my own, but felt it this morning required of me; and so, in submission and subjection to my God, have I given up to do it, leaving the success and service of it with him.

“I. P.”

“15th of 3d month, 1667.

“Aylesbury,”



Neither to him was it given only to believe, but to suffer also for the sake of Christ. His imprisonments were many, and some of them long, which with great constancy and quietness of mind he underwent. But because so general an account may perhaps not answer the expectation and desire of the reader, I will here subjoin a more particular; but that, as contracted and short as may be.

His first imprisonment was at Aylesbury gaol, in the years 1661 and 1662, being committed thither for worshipping God in his own house; where, for seventeen weeks, great part of it in winter, he was kept in a cold and very incommodious room, without a chimney; from which hard usage, his tender body contracted so great and violent a distemper, that, for several weeks after, he was not able to turn himself in his bed.

His second imprisonment was in the year 1664, being taken out of a meeting, where he with others were peaceably waiting upon the Lord, and sent to Aylesbury gaol, where he again remained a prisoner between seventeen and eighteen weeks.

His third imprisonment was in the year 1665, being taken up, with many others, in the open street of Amersham, as they were carrying and accompanying the body of a deceased Friend to the grave. From hence, he was sent again to Aylesbury gaol; but this commitment being in order to banishment, was but for a month, or thereabouts.

His fourth imprisonment was in the same year 1665, about a month after his releasement from the former. Hitherto his commitment had been by the civil magistrates; but now, that he might experience the severity of each, he fell into the military hands. A rude soldier, without any other warrant than what he car-

ried in his scabbard, came to his house, and told him he came to fetch him before Sir Philip Palmer, one of the deputy-lieutenants of the county. He meekly went, and was by him sent with a guard of soldiers to Aylesbury gaol, with a kind of mittimus, importing, "That the gaoler should receive and keep him in safe custody during the pleasure of the Earl of Bridgewater;" who had it seems conceived so great, as well as unjust, displeasure against this innocent man, that although (it being the sickness year) the plague was suspected to be in the gaol, he would not be prevailed with, by the earnest importunity of a person both of considerable quality and power in the county, only to permit Isaac Penington to be removed to another house in the town, and there kept prisoner until the gaol were clear. Afterwards a prisoner dying in the gaol of the plague, the gaoler's wife, her husband being absent, gave leave to Isaac Penington to remove to another house, where he was shut up about six weeks: after which, by the procurement of the Earl of Ancram, a release was sent from the said Philip Palmer, by which he was discharged, after he had suffered imprisonment three quarters of a year, with apparent hazard of his life, and that for no offence.

By that time he had been at home about three weeks, a party of soldiers from the said Philip Palmer (by order of the Earl of Bridgewater, as was reported) came to his house, and seizing him in bed, carried him away to Aylesbury gaol again; where, without any cause showed, or crime objected, he was kept in prison a year and a half, in rooms so cold, damp, and unhealthy, that it went very near to cost him his life, and procured him so great a distemper, that he lay weak of it several months. At length a relation of his wife, by an habeas corpus, removed

him to the King's-Bench bar, where (with the wonder of the court that a man should be so long imprisoned for nothing) he was at last released in the year 1668. This was his fifth imprisonment.

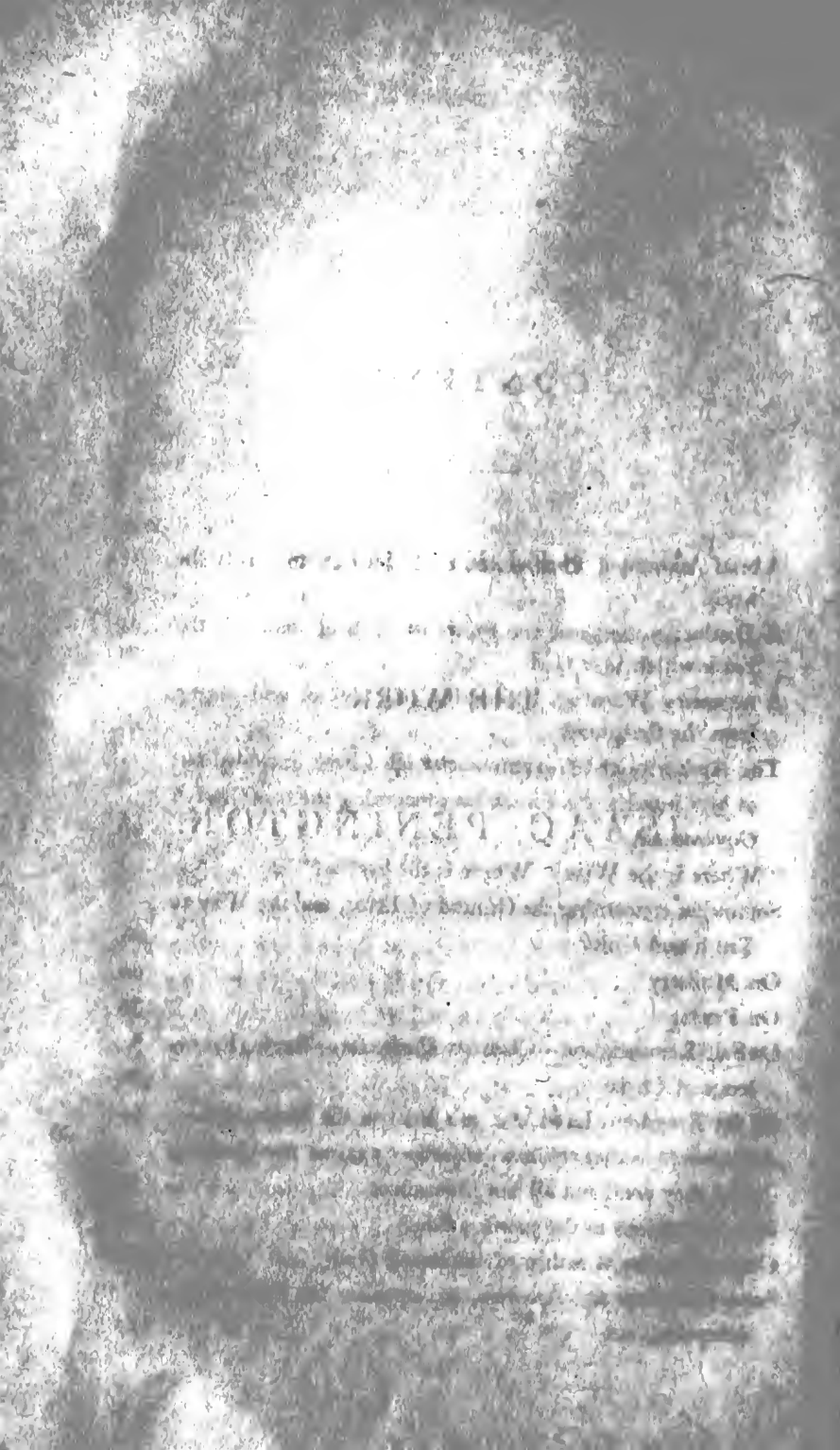
His sixth imprisonment was in the year 1670, in Reading gaol, whither he went to visit his friends that were sufferers there for the testimony of Jesus; of which, notice being given to one called Sir William Armorer, a justice of the peace for that county, and living in the town, he was forthwith sent for before him, and committed to the gaol, thereby becoming a fellow-sufferer with them, whom, being sufferers for the truth, he came to visit. Here he continued a prisoner a year and three quarters, and was brought under the sentence of premunire; but at length the Lord delivered him.

Thus through many tribulations did he enter into the kingdom; having been exercised, tried, proved, and approved by the Lord. Long was he in the warfare, and, like a good soldier, manfully endured the fight of afflictions: but having fought the good fight, and kept the faith, he hath now, in the Lord's good time, finished his course, and is gone to possess the crown of righteousness laid up for him, and all those that love the bright appearance of the Lord. A faithful labourer he was in the Lord's vineyard for many years; but now hath he ceased from his labour, and his works follow him. He walked with God, and is translated. To the Lord he lived, and in the Lord he died, and by the Spirit of the Lord he is pronounced blessed: blessed for ever be the name of the Lord therefore.

[His death took place in the year 1679, in the 63rd year of his age.]



SELECTIONS  
FROM  
THE WORKS  
OF  
ISAAC PENINGTON.



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## SELECTIONS FROM PENINGTON.

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### A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF WHAT WE ARE, AND WHAT OUR WORK IS IN THE WORLD.

WE are a people whom God hath converted to himself; a people in whom God hath raised up the seed of his own life, and caused it to reign over the earthly part in ourselves; a people whom God hath divorced from the spirit of whoredom, and joined to his own Spirit. We, many of us, sought truly and only after God from our childhood; our consciences bear us witness in the sight of God; but the honesty of our hearts was still betrayed, and we led aside by the [adulterous] spirit, and knew not how to turn to that of God in us, which inclined us towards God. By this means we came to great distress and misery beyond all men. Not but that all men were in as great a want of God, his life, power, and presence, as we; but the sense thereof was not so quickened in others as in us. Now it pleased the Lord at length to pity us, and to inform our minds towards himself; to show us where life lay, and where death lay; and how to turn from the one and to the other, and he gave us his helping hand to turn us: and by being turned to him, we have

tasted of the truth, of the true wisdom, of the true power, of the true life, of the true righteousness, of the true redemption ; and by receiving of this from God, and tasting and handling of it, we come to know, that that which the world hath set up in the stead of it, is not the thing itself. Now mark, we are not persons that have shot up out of the old root into another appearance, as one sect hath done out of another, till many are come up one after another, the ground still remaining the same out of which they all grew ; but that ground hath been shaken and shaking, destroyed and destroying, removed and removing in us ; and the old root of Jesse hath been made manifest in us, and we have been transplanted by the everlasting power of life, and a real change brought forth in us out of that spirit wherein the world lives and worships, into another spirit, into which nothing which is of the world can enter. And here we have met with the call of God, the conversion to God, the regeneration in God, the justification, the sanctification, the wisdom, the redemption, the true life and power of God, which the world cannot so much as bear the name of. And what we are made of God in Christ, we know to be truth, and no lie ; and when we testify of this to the world, in the measure of the life of God in us, we speak truth, and no lie ; though the world, which knoweth not the truth, cannot hear our voice.

Now our work in the world is to hold forth the virtues of him that hath called us ; to live like God ; not to own any thing in the world which God doth not own ; to forget our country, our kindred, our father's house, and to live like persons of another country, of another kindred, of another family ;

not to do any thing of ourselves, and which is pleasing to the old nature; but all our words, all our conversation, yea, every thought in us, is to become new. Whatever comes from us, is to come from the new principle of life in us, and to answer that in others; but we must not please the old nature at all in ourselves, nor in any else. And walking faithfully thus with God, we have a reward at present, and a crown in the end, which doth and will countervail all the reproaches and hardships we do or can meet with in the world.

We are also to be witnesses for God, and to propagate his life in the world; to be instruments in his hand to bring others out of death and captivity into true life and liberty. We are to fight against the powers of darkness everywhere, as the Lord calleth us forth. And this we are to do in his wisdom, according to his will, in his power, and in his love, sweetness, and meekness. We are not to take ways according to our own wisdom, but there must be a strict watch set in the life, lest that get up again; nor must we speak such words as man's wisdom would call wise; nor may we go in our own will to seek any; but the Lord must go before: nor may we make use of our own strength, but feel his arm in our weakness: nor may we go forth in that love, sweetness, or meekness, which is pleasing to the fleshly mind; but we must be true to God, handling the sword skilfully, and faithfully, judging and cutting down the transgressor in the power and authority of God: and when the meek, the lowly, the humble thing is reached and raised, then the true love, the sweetness, the tenderness, the meekness must go forth to that. The Lord God is rough with the transgressor, and all along

the Scripture heweth and judgeth him; and if we come forth in the same spirit, we shall find the same leadings where we meet with the same thing: for the Lord God will never be tender there; nor can that which comes from him, lives in him, is led by him, be tender there, where he is not.

Now the very root of this severity is good, and of God, and hath love and sweetness at the bottom of it; yea, in pity, love, and bowels do we use the sword. It is in pity to the poor captived creature, that that might be cut down which keeps it in bonds and captivity. And though we seem enemies to all sorts of men for the Lord's sake; yet we are not enemies, nor could do the least hurt to them any way; but are true friends to their souls, and bodies also: and our only controversy is with that which captives and makes them miserable; for we fight not at all with flesh and blood, but with the principality and power which led from God, and rules in it against God, to the poor creature's ruin and destruction. Yea, if we had all the power of the earth in our hands, we could not set up our own way, (if, after the manner of men, I may so call it,) or so much as disturb others in their way thereby; but should wait in patience till God gave us an entrance by his power.

Now let not men run on in heats against us; but let them seriously consider whether we be of God or no: and let them consider not with the reason and understanding which is alienated from God; but with the witness which lies hid in the heart. There is one great palpable argument that we are of God, which is this: all the world is against us; the worldly part everywhere fights with us; the worldly part, in every sort and sect of men, op-

poseth us; the rage of men everywhere riseth up against us: but those that are so hot against us, if at any time they become but meek and calm, patiently considering our cause, and consulting thereupon with the testimony that they find in their own hearts concerning us, they soon become pacified, and see that we are no man's enemies, against no righteous law, not against relations, not against governments, not against any thing in the world that is good; but only against that which is evil and corrupt. And of a truth, the corruption of things God hath shown unto us, and daily calls us forth after an immediate manner to witness against.

Therefore let men be sober, and take heed what they do, lest they be found fighters against God; for the reproaches, the scoffs, with other persecutions, which seem to be cast at us, light on him. It is not as we are men, but as we are obedient to him, as we stand witnesses for him, that we meet with these things. Now, as it is not we ourselves that do these things, but the life and power of God in us; so, it is not we that are struck at, but that life and power: if it were not for that, we might be as acceptable as other men. It is because we are not of the world, but God hath called us out of the world, that we are so hated of the world. This is the true cause; though the world will no more now acknowledge it, than it would in former ages. Yet I do not speak this for my own sake, to avoid my share in the cross; for the reproach of Christ is our riches; yea, far greater treasure than is to be found in the palace of Egypt. Yea, the presence of God, the sweet power of life, makes up all our losses; so that we have no cause to

complain. It is very sweet, pleasant, and profitable for us to be found sufferers for God ; but we know it will not be profitable for you to be found persecutors: and this is told you in true love and good-will, by one who wishes no evil to you, for all that evil that ye have exercised toward the dear and precious people of God for these many years. O ! that God would open your eyes, that ye might see whom ye have opposed, and against whom ye have hardened and strengthened yourselves, that ye might bow to him, and receive life from him, and not perish in your gain-saying and opposition.—*From a Piece entitled, "The Way of Life and Death made manifest," &c. 1658. Works, vol. i. p. 90.*

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A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE FAITH WHICH IS OF MAN, AND THE FAITH WHICH IS OF GOD : *one whereof is the Faith of Zion, the other the Faith of Babylon: the one laying hold on Christ, as he is revealed the King of Life in Zion; the other lays hold on an Historical Relation of Christ, the Fame whereof hath sounded in Babylon.*

THERE is a faith which is of a man's self; and a faith which is the gift of God : or a power of believing, which is found in the nature of fallen man ; and a power of believing, which is given from above. As there are two births, the first and the second, so they have each their faith ; and each believe with their faith, and seem to lay



hold on the same thing for life; and the contention about the inheritance will not be ended, till God determine it. Cain will sacrifice with his faith, and he believes he shall be accepted: if he had not believed so, he would not have been so angry when he found it otherwise: and the Cainish spirit in man, the vagabond from the life of God, which hath not an habitation in God, nor the eternal life of God abiding in him, is busy with the same faith at this day, and hath the same expectation from it as Cain had.

This is the root of the false religion; of the false hope; of the false peace; of the false joy; of the false rest; of the false comfort; of the false assurance; as the other is of the true. In this faith, which is of man, and in the improvement of it, stands all the knowledge, zeal, devotion, and worship of the world in general, and of the worldly part in every man in particular: but the true knowledge, the true zeal, the true devotion, the true worship, stands in the faith which is given of God, to them which are born of the immortal seed; which lives in God, and in which God liveth for ever.

Now it deeply concerns every man, to consider from which of these his knowledge, religion, and worship proceed, and in which of them they stand. For if they proceed from, and stand in, the faith which is of man, they cannot please God, nor conduce to the salvation of the soul. But though they may taste very pleasantly to man's palate now, and administer much hope and satisfaction to him at present, yet they will fail at the time of need: for, as Christ said concerning the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, so may I concerning this

faith; *Except your faith, with the works of it, exceed that faith, and all the works of it* (even to the uttermost improvement thereof) *which is to be found in man's nature, it will never lead you to the kingdom of God, nor be able to give you any right to the inheritance of life*—For he that will inherit, must be the right heir, must have the faith of Abraham, the faith of Isaac; which springs up from the root of life in the seed; and this leads the seed into that spring of life (out of which it shot forth as a branch) which is the inheritance promised to the seed. And here is Christ, Alpha and Omega, in every particular soul where life is begun and perfected, running its course through time, back to that which was before the beginning.

Therefore observe, and consider well, what this faith which is of a man's self can do; and how far it may go in the changing of man, and in producing a conformity of him to the letter of the Scriptures. And then consider where it is shut out, what it cannot do, what change it cannot make, what it cannot conform to; that so the true distinction may be let into the mind, and not a foundation laid of so great a mistake in a matter of so great concernment.

1. A man may believe the history of the Scriptures; yea, and all the doctrines of them (so far as he can reach them with his understanding) with this faith which is of man. As by this faith a man can believe an history probably related to him; so by this faith he believes the histories of the Scriptures, which are more than probably related. As by this faith a man can receive doctrines of instruction out of philosophers' books; so by the same faith he may receive doctrines of instruction

out of the Scriptures. Reading a relation of the fall of man, of the recovery by Christ, that there is no other way to life, &c. this faith can believe the relation of these things, as well as it can believe the relation of other things.

2. This being believed from the relation of the history of these things, it naturally sets all the powers of man on work (kindling the understanding, will, and affections) towards the avoiding of misery, and the attaining of happiness. What would not a man do to avoid perpetual extremity of misery on soul and body for ever, and to obtain a crown of everlasting blessedness? This boils the affections to an height, and sets the understanding on work to the utmost, to gather all the rules of Scripture, and to practise all the duties and ordinances therein mentioned. What can the Scripture propose to be believed, that he will not believe? What can it propose to be done, that he will not do? Must he pray? He will pray. Must he hear? He will hear. Must he read? He will read. Must he meditate? He will meditate. Must he deny himself, and all his own righteousness and duties, and hope only for salvation in the merits of Christ? He will seem to do that too; and say, when he has done all he can, he is but an unprofitable servant. Does the Scripture say, he can do nothing without the Spirit? He will acknowledge that too, and he hopes he has the Spirit. God has promised the Spirit to them that ask it; and he has asked long, and asks still, and therefore hopes he has it. Thus man, by a natural faith, grows up and spreads into a great tree, and is very confident and much pleased; not

perceiving the defect in his root, and what all his growth here will come to.

3. This being done with much seriousness and industry, there must needs follow a great change in man : his understanding will be more and more enlightened ; his will more and more conformed to that to which he thus gives himself up, and to which he thus bends himself with all his strength ; his affections more and more warmed ; he will find a kind of life and growth in this, according to its kind. Let a man's heart be in any kind of study or knowledge, applying himself strictly to it, he gathers understanding in his mind, and warmth in his affection : so it is also here. Yea, this being more excellent in itself, must needs produce a more excellent understanding, and a more excellent warmth, and have a greater power and influence upon the will.

4. Now, how easy is it for a man to mistake here, and call this the truth ! First, he mistakes this for the true faith ; and then he mistakes in applying to this all that which belongs to the true faith : and thus entering into the spirit of error at first, he errs in the whole course of his religion, from the beginning to the end. He sees a change made by this in him ; and this he accounts the true conversion and regeneration. This leads him to ask, and seek, and pray ; and this he accounts the true praying, the true seeking, the true asking. This cleanseth (after its kind) his understanding, will, and affections ; and this he takes for the true sanctification. The justification which is to the true believer, he also applies to this faith ; and so he has a peace, a satisfaction, a rest here, and an

hope of happiness hereafter. Thus he receives what is already revealed; and he waits for what may be further revealed, which he can embrace and conform to, turning still upon this centre, and growing up from this root. And he that does not come hither in religion, falls short of the improvement of man's nature, and of the faith that grows there, (which naturally leads all the powers of nature hither, and fixes them here,) which is but dead. And now this man is safe; he is a believer; he is a worshipper of God; he is a Christian; he is an observer of the commands of Christ: when the overflowing scourge comes, it shall not touch him: all the judgments, plagues, threatenings in the Scriptures, belong not to him, but to the unbelievers; to them that know not God; to them that worship not God; to them that observe not the commands of Christ. Thus, by his untempered mortar from his false faith, he has built up a wall against the deluge of wrath; which wall will tumble down upon him when the wrath comes. The growth of this faith, and great spreading of it into all this knowledge, zeal, and devotion, hath not changed the nature of it all this while; but it is the same that it was at the beginning, even a power of nature in the first birth; and all these fruits are but the fruits of the first nature, which is still alive under all this. All this can never kill the principle out of which it grows; but feeds it more, and fattens it for the slaughter.

Thus far this faith can go: but then there is somewhat it is shut out of at the very first: there is somewhat this faith cannot receive, believe, or enter into. What is that? It is the life, the power, the inward part of this. Though it may

seem to have unity with all the Scriptures in the letter; yet it cannot have unity with one Scripture in the life: for its nature is shut out of the nature of the things there witnessed. As for instance: it may have a literal knowledge of Christ, according as the Scripture relates; of his birth, preaching, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession, &c. Yea, but the thing spoken of it knoweth not. The nature of Christ (which is the Christ) is hid from that eye. So it may have a literal knowledge of the blood of Christ, and of justification; but the life of the blood which livingly justifieth, that birth cannot feel; but can only talk of it, according to the relation it reads in the Scripture. So it may have a literal knowledge of sanctification; but the thing that sanctifieth, it cannot receive into itself. So for redemption, peace, joy, hope, love, &c. it may get into the outward part of all these; but the inward part, the life, the spirit of them, it is shut out of, and cannot touch or come near; nor can it witness that change which is felt and known here. And here is the great contention in the world between these two births; the one contending for their knowledge in the letter, and the other contending for their knowledge in the life: the one setting up their faith from the natural part, calling it spiritual; and the other, who have felt the stroke of God upon this, (and thereby come to know the difference,) setting up the faith of the true heir: which faith hath a different beginning, and a different growth from the other, and will be welcomed into the land and kingdom of life; when the other will be manifested to be but the birth of the bond-woman, and be thrust forth with its mother to seek their bread

abroad : for the seed of the bond-woman is not to inherit with Isaac, the seed of promise.

*Quest.* What then is that faith which is the gift of God ? And which is distinct from this ?

*Ans.* It is that power of believing which springs out of the seed of eternal life ; and leavens the heart, not with notions of knowledge, but with the powers of life. The other faith is drawn out of man's nature, by considerations which affect the natural part, and is kept alive by natural exercises of reading, hearing, praying, studying, meditating in that part ; but this springs out of a seed of life given, and grows up in the life of that seed, and feeds on nothing but the flesh and blood of Christ ; in which is the living virtue, and immortal nourishment of that which is immortal. This faith, at its first entrance, strikes that part dead in which the other faith did grow, and by its growth perfects that death, and raiseth up a life which is of another nature than ever entered into the heart of man to conceive. And by the death of this part in us, we come to know and enjoy life ; and by the life we have received, know, and enjoy, we come to see that which other men call life (and which we ourselves were apt to call life formerly) to be but death. And from this true knowledge, we give a true testimony to the world of what we have seen and felt ; but no man receiveth our testimony. It grieves us to the heart to see men set up a perishing thing as the way to life ; and our bowels are exceedingly kindled, when we behold an honest zeal and simplicity betrayed ; and in tender love do we warn men of the pit, into which they are generally running so fast ; though men reward us with hatred for our good-will, and become our bit-

ter enemies because we tell them the truth, and the most necessary truth for them to know; which they can bear neither in plain words, nor yet in parables. Yet be not rough and angry; but meekly wait to read this following parable aright, and it will open into life. The parable is briefly this :

That which sold the birthright, seeks the birthright with tears and great pains; but shall never recover it. But there is one which lies dead, (which hath the promise,) which stirs not, which seeks not till he is raised by the power of the Father's life, and then he wrestles with the Father, prevails, and gets the blessing from him. Therefore know that part which is up first, and is so busy in the willing and in the running, and makes such a noise about duties, and ordinances, and graces, to keep down the life which it hath slain: and know that seed of life which is the heir, which lies underneath all this, and must remain slain while this lives: but if ever ye hear the voice of the Son of God, this will live, and the other die. And happy for ever will he be, who knows this! But misery will be his portion, who cannot witness a thorough change by the almighty power of the living God, but hath only painted the old nature and sepulchre, but never knew the old bottle broken, and a new one formed, which alone is able to receive and retain the new wine of the kingdom; whereas the other (Pharisee-like) can only receive a relation of the letter concerning the kingdom.—*From a Piece entitled, "The Axe laid to the Root of the old corrupt Tree," &c. 1659. Works, vol. i. p. 267.*



## A NECESSARY WARNING,

### CONCERNING

#### ADDING TO AND TAKING FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

IT is recorded, Rev. xxii. 18, 19, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Great are the plagues that are written in this book, even *the pouring out of eternal wrath without mixture; torment day and night, in the presence of the Lamb, &c.* As the growth and fulness of the mystery of iniquity are spoken of in this book, so the measuring out of the fulness of wrath to it, is spoken of also. And great is the life and blessedness that is here promised, to those that fight with and overcome the mystery of iniquity; and receive not any marks or names of the beast, nor are subject to any of his horns, though he push ever so hard with them. Now to meet with all the plagues here threatened, and to miss of all the blessedness here promised, is it not a sad state? Why, he that addeth to these things here spoken, or diminisheth from the words of this prophecy, the Lord hath said this shall befall him. Therefore, in the fear of that God who hath spoken this, and will make it good, let every one search, who is the adder, who is the diminisher.

Now mark, see if this be not a clear thing. He that giveth any other meaning of any Scripture, than what is the true proper meaning thereof, he both addeth and diminisheth; he taketh away the true sense, he addeth a sense that is not true. The Spirit of the Lord is the true expositor of Scriptures; he never addeth nor diminisheth: but man, being without that Spirit, doth but guess, doth but imagine, doth but study or invent a meaning, and so he is ever adding or diminishing. This is the sense, saith one; this is the sense, saith another; this is the sense, saith a third; this, saith a fourth: another that is witty, and large in his comprehension, he says they will all stand; another, perhaps more witty than he, says none of them will stand, and he invents a meaning different from them all. And then, when they are thus expounding them, they will say, take the sense thus, it will yield this observation; or take it thus, and it will afford this observation. Doth not this plainly show, that he who thus saith, hath not the Spirit of the Lord to open the Scripture to him, and manifest which is the true sense, but is working in the mystery of darkness? And yet this very person, who is thus working with his own dark spirit in the dark, will in words confess, that there is no true understanding or opening of Scripture, but by the Spirit of God. If it be so, how darest thou set thy imagination, thy fancy, thy reason, thy understanding on work, and so be guessing at that which the Spirit doth not open to thee, and so art found adding and diminishing?

Now he that is the adder, he that is the diminisher, he crieth out against the Spirit of the Lord, and chargeth him with adding and diminishing:

for man being judge, he will judge his own way to be true, and God's to be false. That which is the adding and diminishing, he calls the true expounding of the place; but if the Spirit of the Lord immediately open any thing to any son or daughter, he cries, *This is an adding to the word: the Scripture is written; there are no more revelations to be expected now; the curse, saith he, is to them that add.* Thus he removes the curse from his own spirit, and way of study and invention, to which it appertains; and casts it upon the Spirit of the Lord. And man cannot possibly avoid this in the way that he is in; for having first judged his own darkness to be light, then in the next place he must needs judge the true light to be darkness. He that hath aforehand set up his own invented meaning of any Scripture to be the true meaning, he must needs oppose the true meaning, and call it false, and so apply himself to form all the arguments he can out of other Scriptures, to make it appear false. Thus man, having begun wrong in his knowledge of the Scriptures, stands engaged to make use of them against the Lord, and against his own soul; and yet really in himself thinks that he makes a right use of them, and that he serves the Lord, and that he is not opposing his truth, but opposing error and heresy; while he himself is in the error, and in the heresy, and against the truth; being a stranger to that Spirit, in whose immediate life and presence the truth grows.

Did the Lord, in these words of forbidding to add or diminish upon so great a penalty, lay a restraint and limit upon his own Spirit, that it

should no more hereafter speak in his sons and daughters; or did he intend to lay bounds upon the unruly spirit of man? Did God leave man's spirit at liberty to invent and form meanings of his words, and bind up his own Spirit from speaking further words afterwards? When Moses said, Thou shalt not add or diminish, was this to be any stop to the prophets, in whom God should speak afterwards? Is not this one of the subtle serpent's inventions, to keep up the esteem of man's invented meanings as the true sense, and to make a fortification against the entrance of that Spirit, which can discover all his false interpretations of the true words of God, and to make him see that he is the adder and the diminisher, and that his name will not be found in the book of life, when the true light is held forth to read by.

— *Quest.* But how may I avoid adding to the things, and diminishing from the words, of this prophecy, and of other Scriptures; that I may not meet with the weight of this curse, or miss of the blessing?

*Ans.* Dost thou ask this question from thy heart, in the simplicity, out of the fleshly wisdom? Then hearken with that ear, and thou shalt set thy seal to mine answer.

1. Wait for the key of knowledge, which is God's free gift. Do not go with a false key to the Scriptures of Truth; for it will not open them. Man is too hasty to know the meaning of the Scriptures, and to enter into the things of God, and so he climbs up over the door with his own understanding; but he has not patience to wait to know the door, and to receive the key which opens and shuts

the door; and by this means he gathers death out of words which came from life. And this I dare positively affirm, that all that have gone this way to work have but a dead knowledge; and it is death in them that feed upon this knowledge, and the life is not raised. Consider now the weight of this counsel in the true balance: there is no opening of the Scriptures but by the true key, nor is there any coming at the key till the Lord please to give it. What then is to be done, but only to wait (in the silence of that part which would be forward, and running beforehand) till the key be given, and to know how to receive it, as it is offered in the light; and not to wait in the will, or expect to receive it according to observations in the fleshly wisdom from the letter.

2. Let not thy understanding have the managing of this key, when it is given; but know the true opener, the skilful user of the key, the hand which can only turn the key aright; and let him have the managing both of his own key, and of thine understanding. Do not run in thine own understanding, or in thine own will, to search out the meaning of Scripture; for then thou feedest with the Scripture that which it is the intent of all words of life to destroy; but as thou waitedst for the key at first, so continually wait for the appearances and movings of the user of the key, and he will shut out thy understanding and will continually, which would still be running after the literal part of Scriptures; and let thee into the life both of the prophecies and doctrines thereof. Man, when he hath received a true gift from God, he would be managing of it himself, and to be sure he

will manage it for himself; (for the gratifying and pleasing of himself, and not for God;) and then God, being provoked, takes away the substance, and leaves him the shell. Therefore he that hath received a gift must be very watchful against that which would betray, or he may easily lose it: for though the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; yet if that lay hold of the gift which was not called, and to which it was not given, the Lord will thrust that by, and take away his gift from it.

3. Do not graft any of the fruit of the tree of life upon the tree of knowledge; for it will not grow there: an appearance, a likeness of the true fruit may grow there; but the true fruit itself will not. My meaning is, do not make a treasury of knowledge in the understanding-part, which is to perish; but know the true treasury of all the things of life, which is in the life itself; and in that understanding which is formed, kept, and lives in the life. Lay no manna by to feed upon in the old store-house; (lest the fleshly part should be running thither, when its fleshly appetite is kindled after food;) but daily receive the continual bread from the hand of life. The wisdom of the life strikes at thy wisdom and understanding; and if ever thou wilt grow wise any more, thou lovest this, and canst not possibly retain it: for that part is then getting up in thee, in which it cannot be held: but only a shadow, an image, a resemblance and likeness of it, which feeds and pleases that part which fain would have life, but cannot know it; and therefore is necessitated to make images and likenesses of things in heaven, or things in earth, that it might have somewhat.

4. Take not up a rest in openings of things, though by the true key. Take heed of overvaluing that kind of knowledge: for that part which overvalues that knowledge will presently be puffed up with it; but there is a more excellent and safer kind of knowledge to be pressed after, which is a knowledge of things by receiving of them. There is a knowledge of things by the Spirit's opening the words which speak of them, or by inward immediate prophecies from the word of life in the heart. This is an excellent knowledge, and not to be found in the earthly part of man: yet the earthly part (when this knowledge is given) is very apt to be swelled and exalted with it; but then there is also a knowledge, which ariseth from the gift of the thing itself. This knowledge is very precious, and much more full and certain than the other, having the nature and immediate power of life in itself, and so is perfectly able to preserve. As for instance, to make it more plain: there may be a knowledge of justification, by the Spirit's opening the words written in Scripture concerning justification, and the blood of sprinkling; and this is a good knowledge, where there is a true opening of it from the Spirit: but then there is a knowledge by feeling of the blood of sprinkling in the heart, and by seeing with the new eye the way of its justification; and in this knowledge is the power and the cleansing of the life received, which in the other was but spoken of. Therefore rest not in opening of prophecies, or true meanings of these things, (though this kind of knowledge is very excellent, and hath been very rare,) but wait to feel the thing itself which the

words speak of, and to be united by the living Spirit to that, and then thou hast a knowledge from the nature of the thing itself; and this is more deep and inward than all the knowledge that can be had from words concerning the thing.

5. When thou feelest things, then seek their preservation in the proper spring of their own life. Let the root bear thee, and all thy knowledge, with all that is freely given thee of God. When thou feelest thyself leavened with the life, and become a branch shot out of the life, then learn how to abide in the life, and to keep all that is given thee there; and have nothing which thou mayst call thine own any more; but to be lost in thyself, and found in him. Know the land of the living, wherein all the things of life live, and can live nowhere else.

Now in all this, in this whole course, from the very first step of it, there is certainty, there is stability, there is infallibility. From the very first opening of the true key, I begin to learn somewhat of God; and to learn certainly, and feel an assurance and establishment in it: and growing up here, I grow up in the true learning, and in the true settlement, and so I am not unlearned and unstable, wresting the Scriptures to my own destruction: for I take none of the knowledge of the Scriptures from myself, from my own understanding, from my own study and invention, or from the studies of other expositors, but from a certain hand. And how can he wrest Scripture, who is kept single, and has no desire to have any thing to be the meaning of it, but what is the meaning; nor no will to know the meaning, further than the



good-will of him whose Spirit penned it thinks good to give forth the meaning to him; and who waits to receive this, not to feed the lustful, knowing part in himself, but to feed the life with it? And when the life hath no use for it, he is content to have it shut up, and to be without it: I say, how is it possible for this man to wrest Scriptures? But now a man that hath taken in a body of knowledge already, he goes to the Scripture, and bends it, to make it speak answerable to that; and where it speaks contrary, he invents a way to make it comply, and so wrests Scriptures forward and backward, to make them speak agreeable to what he has already received and believed. Thus every sort of persons, Papists and Protestants, bend the Scriptures, to make them speak conformable to their opinions and practices; not having *the true learning*, which gives to read them in the true original, where the knowledge of what they speak and mean is certain: and so they are also *unstable*, and subject to be shaken by a wind of reason which is stronger than their own. And this wresting of Scripture is *to their own destruction*; for that part which is so much as desirous to bend a Scripture, is to be destroyed; and that part cannot receive the true knowledge; but stumbles in its own wisdom and way of seeking, at the wisdom of God, and at the true way of finding.

—If ye could once be mild, gentle, and calm, and turn from your own wisdom and fleshly knowledge of things, it might please God to remove your stumbling-blocks, and to open that eye in you which can see the antichristian nature, and discern between the coverings which it hath formed

to hide its deceitful spirit under, and the true garment and clothing of life. But the seed of the kingdom is little, and ye are great; how can ye enter into it? The pearl lies hid in the field, and ye are gazing up to heaven; how can ye see it? Christ is descended into the lower parts of the earth, and ye are using means to ascend upwards in the wrong nature; how can ye meet with him? The gospel hath been hid; the sun hath not shined; it hath been night, and ye have got many false candles; which way can ye acknowledge the little glimmering of the day-star, who have such satisfaction in the warmth of your false fires? Ye are far from the true light, who have not yet received so much of it as to discover the darkness of the night. Ye are too high, too wise, too knowing for Christ, or for the sight and acknowledgment of the true means which lead to life. And if ye could once come to see this, there might be some hope; but in that wisdom wherein your life and knowledge stand, ye are shut out; and ye are reasoning and stumbling at the stone; while others (who are broken in spirit, and in meekness and humility led to try) find it a sure foundation, even a foundation of eternal life, for the true seed of life; and are built into the living city, which is made without hands, and without any of the tools of man's wisdom.—*From "The Axe," &c. Works, vol. i. p. 285.*

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THE AUTHORITY AND GOVERNMENT WHICH CHRIST  
EXCLUDED OUT OF HIS CHURCH, AND SOMEWHAT  
CONCERNING THE TRUE CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

Matt. xx. ver. 25 to 29.

*“ But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you ; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister : and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”*

HERE Christ cuts off that power and authority which grows up in the corrupt nature of man, which was ever and anon springing up even in the disciples. Here he wholly excludes it out of the church, and says expressly he would have no such thing among them ; no such kind of greatness, no such kind of authority.

[But doth this signify or imply, that he would have no authority at all ? Doth this exclude the authority and government of his Spirit and power in his church ? Doth not he, notwithstanding this, say, “ Go tell the church ?” And enjoin the members of the church to hear the church, upon the penalty of-being accounted heathens and publicans ? And did not the Holy Ghost make and appoint overseers over the church ? Acts xx. 28. And what is an overseer ? Or in what were they to oversee ? Were they not to oversee in the true

light, to which every child of light is to be subject ? And they that did resist the light, Spirit, and power of the Holy Ghost in any of the overseers, were they not unruly ?] <sup>(1)</sup>

Among the Gentiles there are great ones, there are princes ; and these great ones, these princes, they lord it over the inferior ones, exercising authority and dominion over them ; “ but it shall not be so among you.”

The Gentile state was a shadow, even as the Jews' state was a shadow. The one of death, the other of life ; the one of darkness, the other of light. The one was the image of Satan, the prince of wickedness ; the other of Christ, the prince of righteousness and peace. They were both veils, under which the two kingdoms were hid.

Now in the Gentile state there were nations, princes, laws, governments, dominions, authorities, &c. but all in the fall, all in darkness, all in the transgression from the life. The whole state was corrupt, and there must be no imitation from hence, no likeness of any such thing in the kingdom of Christ, no such kind of law, no such kind of government, no such kind of authority, no such kind of anger with persons that transgress, no such kind of dealing with any, no such kind of detriment or hurt to any. *There is nothing to hurt in the mountain of God's holiness ;* but there is a righteous sceptre, a sweet sceptre, a spiritual sceptre, which reacheth the spirit in the power of life, but toucheth not the outward man.

(1) This, and the succeeding paragraphs in brackets, are taken from a piece written subsequently, and entitled, “Some Misrepresentations of me,” &c.

Two things are here excluded by Christ, from whence all the mischief ariseth in the church, all the tyranny and oppression of men's consciences, and of their persons, estates, and liberties, for conscience sake: first, *greatness*; secondly, the *exercising dominion and authority* by those that would be great therein.

[But is there not a true greatness? Those that lie low before the Lord, and have humbled themselves under his mighty hand; doth not the Lord exalt them in due time, filling them with his Spirit, life, virtue, and power? And is not that great in them? And are they not highly favoured, and exalted in the eye of the Lord therein? (Oh! none knows how great those are in the eye of the Lord, who are poor and low, and nothing in their own eyes!) And is there not a true authority and dominion of God's Spirit in the church in general, as well as in the particular, over the spirit and power of darkness? Because of which spirit, because of which power, because of which holy authority and dominion, the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against it.]

Such a kind of greatness as is in the world, is the destruction of the life of Christ; and such a kind of dominion and authority as is among the nations, is the direct overturning of the kingdom of Christ. It sets up another power than Christ's, another greatness than Christ's, another kind of authority than Christ's; and so it eats out the virtue and life of his kingdom, and makes it just like one of the kingdoms of this world.

[But doth all this hinder, deny, or oppose Christ's Spirit, Christ's power, Christ's truth and grace from arising in the church, in a way of

spiritual and holy government? Because man is not to aspire, nor take upon him to reign or rule, because of grace, gifts, or knowledge received; shall not therefore the head govern the body? Shall not life, and truth, and the wisdom of God, spring in the church, to order and govern the church? But must every man be left to the dictates of what he calls light in him, and not be re-proved or testified against, though the Spirit of God manifest it (to them that are indeed in the light, life, Spirit, and power) that it is not light, as persons may pretend and imagine; but real darkness, gross darkness, darkness that may be felt, even by the least babes that are in the true, living sense?]

“It shall not be so among you.” This spirit must be kept out from among you; this aspiring spirit, this lofty ruling spirit, which loves to be great, which loves to have dominion, which would exalt itself, because of the gift it has received, and would bring others into subjection; this spirit must be subdued amongst Christ’s disciples, or it will ruin all. The Lord gives grace and knowledge for another end than for men to take upon them to be great, and rule over others because of it. And he that, because of this, thinks himself fit to rule over men’s consciences, and to make them bow to what he knows or takes to be truth, he loseth his own life hereby; and so far as he prevails upon others, he doth but destroy their life too. For it is not so much speaking true things that doth good, as speaking them from the pure, and conveying them to the pure: for the life runs along from the vessel of life in one, into the vessel of life in another; and the words (though ever so true) can-

not convey life to another, but as the living vessel opens in the one, and is opened in the other.

*Quest.* But how shall this spirit be kept out, or kept down, that it may not hurt the disciple in whom it ariseth ; or if it do, that the hurt may remain to himself, and may not prejudice the church ?

*Ans.* When this spirit begins to arise up in any, so soon as ever he perceives it, in that which discovers it, he is to fight against it ; laying himself so much the lower, by how much he finds this evil spirit raising him up. He is to hearken to that which presents the cross to it, and so to come down and subject himself in serving and ministering to those who are little in his eyes. Instead of reigning over them, let him lie beneath them : let him watch and know the life even in the meanest, and serve it ; for that is his place. That which would rule is to serve ; that which would be great is to be little ; and the little one is to become a nation. That which is low is to rise ; and thou art not fit to rise with it, further than thou canst serve it, both in thyself and others. Therefore if ever thou be aspiring, if ever thou have a mind to rule, if ever thou think thyself fit to teach, because of what thou hast received, sink down, lie low, take up the cross to that proud spirit, make it bend and serve, let the life in every one rise over it, and trample upon it ; and afterwards that in thee may arise which is fit to teach, yea, and to rule in the Lord : and so long as that hath the dominion, thou mayst be serviceable to the Lord, and to his truth and people ; but if ever the other get up again, thou must presently come down again, or the wrong spirit will get dominion over thee, which with force and cruelty will rule over the life both in thyself

and others. Thus, if a man be faithful to Christ, this evil aspiring spirit, at its first appearance, may be dealt with, and kept down ; but if it be cherished, given way to, and once let up, it will be hard bringing of it down afterwards. Therefore the disciples, or the church of Christ, are to watch over every such spirit, to beat it down, to testify against it, to turn from it, to lay it flat, to put it in its proper place ; that is, beneath all, to minister to all, and so not to suffer it to rise ; see ver. 26. "Let him be your minister." This is his place, this is his work, by the authority of Christ. He that would be great, he that would rule, let him minister. Own him there ; if he will lie low there, if he will be faithful there, ye may have unity with him. But in that his aspiring temper, in his ruling, in his teaching by what he hath gained, or what hath been given to him formerly (if out of the present life) he is to be denied and turned from.

If this rule of Christ's had been kept to, anti-christ's power could never have got up : nor the poor innocent lambs so often have been worried by the wolves. Ah ! poor hearts ! how simply do they come thither, where they once tasted refreshment, to find wholesome advice, not suspecting what is got up there since, but give the dominion to a wrong thing, and so take directions from a wrong spirit, and betray their own simplicity.

Christ urgeth this upon his disciples from his own pattern,—“even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but, &c.” ver. 28. If any had right to be great, surely Christ ; if any had right to exercise authority, surely Christ ; if any was to be advanced because of any gift received, or because of any presence of the Spirit with him,



surely Christ: yet Christ took not upon him this kind of greatness, nor did exercise this kind of authority; but he was a servant; he made use of the gift of the Spirit, of the power of life wherewith the Father filled him, to minister and serve with. He did never lord it over the consciences of any of his disciples; but did bear with them, and pity them in their infirmities. ("What! can ye not watch with me one hour? The spirit," said he, "is willing, but the flesh is weak.") He did not hold forth to them whatever he knew to be truth, requiring them to believe it; but was content with them in their state, and waited till their capacities were enlarged, being still satisfied with the honesty and integrity of their hearts in their present state of weakness. Nor did he strive to reign over the world, or call for fire from heaven, when they would not receive him, or express indignation when they desired him to depart out of their coasts, or pray for twelve legions of angels when they came to betray him, and most unrighteously sought his life: but the life he had received of his Father he gave up as a ransom for his disciples, yea, and for his enemies. Mark: he did not make use of what was given to him, to raise himself up above others, to make his word to stand for a law, and be received; but he waited till that was opened in his disciples, and in the people, which was able to receive his testimony; and he made use of his power of life, and the fulness of the Spirit, to enable him the more abundantly to serve, and to wait in patience for the fulfilling of the will of the Father. And though Israel was not gathered by him, yet was he meek, and patient, and at rest in the will of him that sent him; and instead of reigning over

all, could serve all, and give that life (whose due it was to reign) "a ransom for many," ver. 28.

"His kingdom was not of this world," nor did he seek any greatness or authority according to this world, neither over the Jews, nor over the Gentiles, nor over his own disciples; but he served all, he sought the good of all: the life in him which was to reign over all, yet here served all, suffered for all, and from all, and that was his way to his crown; who having finished his course, fulfilled his service, perfected his sufferings, is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, where now he reigns over all, and is made a king by God in righteousness. And this is the pattern which all his disciples are to walk by. The more life they receive, the more they are to minister; the more they are to serve. They must not lift up themselves by their gifts; they must not hereupon lord it over others, or hold forth their knowledge or doctrines, and think to make others bow thereto; but wait in their service, till the Lord make way into men's hearts, and plant his truth there; and upon him also must they wait for the watering and growth of it.

*Quest.* But is there to be no greatness, no authority among the disciples of Jesus, or in the church of Christ? Is every one to do what he will, to be subject to his own fancies and imaginations, to the inventions of his own corrupt heart? What a confused building will this be? Surely this will not long remain a Zion; but soon become a Babylon, even an heap of disorder and confusion.

*Ans.* There is to be no such kind of greatness, no such kind of authority; yet there is both a greatness and authority suitable to the state of dis-

ciples ; suitable to that kind of kingdom whereof they are. There are laws, there are governments, there are governors, there is ruling, and there is subjection : but all in the Spirit ; all suitable to that which is to be governed ; but no government of, or according to, the flesh. As Christ's kingdom is not of this world, so the government of his church and people is not according to this world ; but as that which gathers is his Spirit, and that which is gathered is spiritual ; so that which is governed is the spirits of his people, and they are to be governed by his Spirit, and spiritually, and not after a fleshly manner.

Thus Christ himself, though he ministered to his disciples, yet he also was their Lord and Master, and in the Spirit and life of the Father ruled over them. And thus the apostles and other ministers of Christ had likewise, in the Spirit, the care of the churches, and authority in the Lord, by his Spirit, to govern the spirits of his people : not to govern after a fleshly manner, by their own wills : not to prescribe to them in a lordly way, either what they should believe or practise ; but, in the light and in the power of the Spirit, to make their way into every one's conscience in the sight of God, ministering to every one in the Spirit according to their capacity and growth, and waiting patiently for God to convey the food and nourishment, and to build their spirits up in the faith thereby.

*The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.* Here is the government, here is the law of rule and subjection in the life. Every one feeling a measure of the Spirit in himself, is thereby taught to own and be subject to greater measure of the

same Spirit in another. He that hath no measure of the Spirit of God, he is not of God, he is none of Christ's: and he that hath received a measure of the Spirit, in the same Spirit feeleth another's measure, and owneth it in its place and service, and knoweth its moving, and cannot quench it, but giveth way to it with joy and delight. When the Spirit moves in any one to speak, the same Spirit moves in the other to be subject and give way: and so every one keeping to his own measure in the Spirit, here can be no disorder, but true subjection of every spirit; and where this is wanting, it cannot be supplied by any outward rule or order set up in the church by common consent: for that is fleshly, and lets in the flesh, and destroys the true order, rule, and subjection.

The apostles and ministers of Christ come from Christ with a message of life and salvation, with a testimony concerning the good-will of God, and his love to mankind; pointing out the way from death to life, from bondage to liberty, from wrath and destruction to peace and salvation. What they have seen, what they have felt, what they have tasted, what they have handled, what they have found redeem and deliver them, that they declare abroad to others, as they are moved, as they are sent, as they are guided and assisted.

Now that which they preach to is men's consciences in the sight of God. They open the truth which they know; they give their testimony in the moving, leading, and power of the Spirit, and they leave it to the same Spirit to demonstrate it to men's consciences as it pleaseth. They are nothing, they can do nothing, they cannot convert any man to God; but the power that speaketh by

them, the same power worketh in other men's consciences at its pleasure. And here is the beginning of the government of Christ in the heart; when his truth carries conviction with it to the conscience, and the conscience is drawn to yield itself up to him, then he lays his yoke upon it, and takes upon him the guiding of it; he cherisheth it, he cleanseth it, he comforteth it, he ordereth it at his pleasure; and he alone preserveth it pure, chaste, gentle, meek, and pliable to the impressions of his Spirit. And as the conscience is kept single and tender to Christ, so his government increases therein; but as it becomes hard, or subject to men's wills, so another spirit gets dominion over it.

Therefore the great work of the minister of Christ is to keep the conscience open to Christ, and to preserve men from receiving any truths of Christ as from them further than the Spirit opens; or to imitate any of their practices further than the Spirit leads, guides, and persuades them. For, persons are exceeding prone to receive things as truths from those whom they have an high opinion of, and to imitate their practices, and so hurt their own growth, and endanger their souls.

[But must not the minister of Christ, who is ordained of God to watch for the soul, watch against that, which (if hearkened to by any particular) will shut the conscience against Christ, and open it to another spirit, who is often working in a mystery to deceive it? And if they see the working of this other spirit in any, ought they not, in faithfulness to Christ, and the souls of such, to warn them of it? And if any, having let in the wrong spirit, turn from and deny the practices which the

Lord once taught them, (and wherein the testimony of truth stands) into practices which are of the world, and answer the world's spirit, and tend to weaken the faithful testimonies of others in the true light and Spirit; ought the minister of Christ to leave these persons to their openness to a wrong spirit and wrong practices, wherein they deny the Lord that bought them and enlightened them, and are shut up against the visitations and testimonies of God's true Spirit and power in his children, who keep their habitations in that light which these are departed from, though they make ever so great pretences to it?]

For, if I receive a truth before the Lord by his Spirit make it manifest to me, I lose my guide, and follow but the counsel of the flesh, which is exceeding greedy of receiving truths, and running into religious practices, without the Spirit. Therefore the main thing in religion is to keep the conscience pure to the Lord, to know the guide, to follow the guide, to receive from him the light whereby I am to walk; and not to take things for truths because others see them to be truths; but to wait till the Spirit make them manifest to me; nor to run into worships, duties, performances, or practices, because others are led thither; but to wait till the Spirit lead me thither. "He that makes haste to be rich" (even in religion, running into knowledge, and into worships and performances, before he feel a true and clear guidance) "shall not be innocent:" nor the Lord will not hold him guiltless, when he comes to visit for spiritual adultery and idolatry. The apostles were exceeding tender in this point: for though they certainly and infallibly knew what was to be be-

lieved ; yet they were not lords over men's faith, but waited till he who is Lord of the faith, would open the way into men's consciences. They did not take upon them to be able to turn the key, to let in truth and conviction into men's spirits (as men in these days have been too apt to undertake) ; but directed them to Him who had the key, there to wait for the conviction and illumination of their minds, and so to receive in, as they found him give forth to them.

" Let every man," saith the apostle, " be fully persuaded in his own mind ;" take heed of receiving things too soon, take heed of running into practices too soon, take heed of doing what ye see others do, but wait for your own particular guidance, and for a full persuasion from God, what is his will concerning you. Though I know this to be a truth, yet do not ye receive it, till God make it manifest to you ; receive truth from his hand, stay till he give it you. Indeed the main matter in religion is to keep out the wrong part, the forward part ; the bastardly birth from running into duties, catching of openings, and laying hold of promises ; and to feel the heir born of the immortal seed, to whom all belongs ; and that the other birth never afterwards get up above him, but be subdued and brought into subjection.

Again, saith the apostle, take heed of doing any thing " doubtingly ;" be not forward, be not hasty ; wait for the leading, wait for the manifestation of the Spirit. Be sure thou receive what thou receivest in faith, and practise what thou practisest in faith ; for " whatsoever is not of faith is sin," being an error from the principle of life, which is to guide ; and thereby thou lovest ground, and

dishonourest Christ, and comest under condemnation.

And so the apostle warns believers, to take heed of drawing one another on too fast, or of judging one another in such things as some of them might have light in, others not. He that eateth, not to judge him that did not eat; and he that did not eat, not to judge him that did eat. Yea, in matters of worship, he that observed a day and kept a sabbath, not to judge him that observed not a day, or kept not a sabbath; for the Jews, which were truly converted, were yet hard to be drawn off from the observation of their sabbath, and could hardly bear with the believing Gentiles, who were never taught to keep their sabbath with them, but were taught to esteem every day, and sanctify it to the Lord, Rom. xiv. 5. And those who esteemed every day, and dedicated it to the Lord (ceasing from sin, and resting to him: for under the gospel we are not to set up a new type, but to enter by faith into the true rest, which is the substance of what the other signified) could hardly bear with them who observed a day. Even in the apostles' days, Christians were too apt to strive after a wrong unity and uniformity in outward practices and observations, and to judge one another unrighteously in these things. And mark; it is not the different practice from one another that breaks the peace and unity, but the judging of one another because of different practices. He that keeps not a day, may unite in the same Spirit, in the same life, in the same love with him that keeps a day; and he who keeps a day, may unite in heart and soul with the same Spirit and life in him who keeps not a day; but he that judgeth the other because of



either of these, errs from the Spirit, from the love, from the life, and so breaks the bond of unity. And he that draws another to any practice, before the life in his own particular lead him; doth, as much as in him lies, destroy the soul of that person, ver. 15. This was the apostle's rule, for every one to perform singly to the Lord what he did, and not for one to meddle with the light or conscience of another, (undervaluing his brother, or judging him because his light and practices differed from his, chap. xiv. 10,) but every one to keep close to their own measure of light, even to that proportion of faith and knowledge, which God of his mercy hath bestowed on them. And here is the true unity in the Spirit, in the inward life, and not in an outward uniformity. That was not necessary in the apostles' days, nor is it necessary now; and that eye which so dotes upon it, overlooks the one thing which is necessary.

[But if the Lord hath taught a man, opened the same eye in him that he opened in others, and brought him into unity and uniformity with the church, in the practices which the Lord hath taught it; and he afterwards let in another spirit, and fall from these practices, and judge the very church itself for continuing in them; may not the church testify to this person, that he is erred from his guide, hath lost the light in himself, and so judgeth amiss, both concerning himself, and concerning the church of God? This hath been the state of some who went out from among us formerly, and may also be the state of some who go out from us now. For as there is one that gathers to the true church; so there is another that endeavours to draw and scatter from it, and then to cause

men to turn head against it, as if it were not of God, but apostatized from the Spirit and principle of truth, which indeed is their own state and condition in God's sight; but not the church's, which was gathered and preserved by him, glory to the Lord, over all the accusations of the accuser, through what mouth soever he utter them forth.]

Men keeping close to God, the Lord will lead them on fast enough, and give them light fast enough; for he taketh care of such, and knoweth what light, and what practices are most proper for them; but for men to walk on faster than the Lord holds forth his light to them, this overturns them, raising up a wrong thing in them, and the true birth hereby comes to suffer, to shrink, and be driven back. And oh! how sweet and pleasant is it to the truly spiritual eye, to see several sorts of believers, several forms of Christians in the school of Christ, every one learning their own lesson, performing their own peculiar service, and knowing, owning, and loving one another in their several places, and different performances to their Master, to whom they are to give an account, and not to quarrel with one another about their different practices! Rom. xiv. 4. For this is the true ground of love and unity, not that such a man walks and does just as I do, but because I feel the same Spirit and life in him, and in that he walks in his rank, in his own order, in his proper way and place of subjection to that. And this is far more pleasing to me, than if he walked just in that rank wherein I walk: nay, so far as I am spiritual, I cannot so much as desire that he should do so, until he be particularly led thereto, by the same Spirit which led me. And he that knows what it is to receive any truths from

the Spirit, and to be led into practices by the Spirit, and how prone the fleshly part is to make haste, and how dangerous that haste is, will not be forward to press his knowledge or practices upon others, but rather wait patiently till the Lord fit them for the receiving thereof, for fear lest they should receive and practise too soon, even in that part which cannot serve the Lord. And this I can truly say concerning myself, I never found my spirit forward to draw any, either to any thing I believed to be true, or to any practice or way of worship I observed or walked in; but desired that the power and leadings of life might go before them, and was afraid lest men should receive things from my hand, and not from the Lord's. Yea, and this I very well remember, that when I walked in the way of Independency (as it hath been commonly called) I had more unity with, and more love towards, such as were single-hearted in other ways and practices of worship (whose spirits I had some feeling of in the true simplicity, and in the life) than with divers of such who were very knowing and zealous in that way of Independency, in whom a wrong thing in the mean time had got up, which had caused them to swerve from the life, and from the simplicity.

[The spiritual eye beholdeth things aright, beholdeth things in the Lord, and tasteth sweetness therein, and is pleased with that which is spiritual. If every one did eye the Lord, subject to the Lord, answer the light and Spirit of the Lord in their own hearts, though the forms in the school of Christ be higher or lower, the lessons different, and the practices answerable, yet every one minding his own place and lesson, and performing his own pe-

culiar service, the spiritual eye would be delighted therewith. And those that are of the true seed and birth do know, own, and love one another in their several places, and different performances to their Master, to whom they are to give an account; and do not quarrel with one another about their different performances. Oh! how sweetly is this practised and experienced among us at this day!

And unity in the life is the ground of true brotherly love and fellowship. Not that another man walks just as I do; but though he be weaker or stronger, yet he walks by the same principle of light, and is felt in the same Spirit of life, which guideth both the weak and the strong, in their several ranks, order, proper way, and place of subjection, to that one Spirit of life and truth, which all are to be subject to.

Nay, he that is truly spiritual and strong in the light and Spirit of the Lord, cannot desire that the weak should walk just as he does; but only as they are strengthened, taught, and led thereunto, by the same Spirit that strengthened, taught, and led him.

This is true concerning every one that is in the faith, that is in the true light, that is in the true Spirit; and keeps his rank, order, place, and subjection, though in a weak and low degree; but will this hold good concerning any that have erred from the faith, have made shipwreck thereof, and have turned from the true light and Spirit in themselves, and left their rank, order, and testimony against the world, and are again become one with the world, even in those very practices which the spirit of the world delights in, and which the Spirit of the Lord hath testified, and still testifieth against, in all that are faithful, and keep to their first love

and light? Is the church to bear with these in their practices, or own such spirits, or believe that they now walk according to the light which first convinced them? Is not the Spirit of judgment with the church? Hath not God given her discerning? Hath she not power and authority from God to try spirits? Yea, and to judge false spirits, that have lost their habitation in the light, though they may still pretend to dwell there; can she not try those which say they are Jews and are not, but have lost the light, Spirit, and power which circumciseth, and keepeth circumcised, and are run back into the uncircumcised paths of the world again, which came from, and answer the uncircumcised spirit and nature, both in themselves and others?]

So that the true church-government being in the Spirit, and over the conscience as in the sight of God, the great care must be to keep it within its bounds, that nothing else govern but the Spirit, and that the government be extended only unto that which is to be governed.

First, Care must be had that nothing govern in the church of Christ, but the Spirit of Christ: that nothing else teach; nothing else exhort; nothing else admonish and reprove; nothing else cut off and cast out. Every minister in the church is to watch over his own spirit, that it intrude not into the work of God, that it take not upon it to be the teacher, the exhorter, the reprover, &c. And every member is to wait in the measure of the Spirit which he hath received, to feel the goings forth of the Spirit in him who teacheth and governeth; and so to subject not to man, but to the Lord; to receive from the Lord, to obey the Lord. Not to know any minister according to the flesh; but to receive, and

submit to what comes from the Spirit, in the Spirit. Not to know Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, but the Spirit ministering in them. Paul may err, Apollos may err, Peter may err, (and did err, when he compelled the Gentiles to live as the Jews, Gal. ii. 14, for which Paul withstood him to the face, ver. 11, and Barnabas also did err, ver. 13.) but the Spirit cannot err; and he that keeps to the measure of the Spirit in himself, cannot let in any of their errors, if they should err; but is preserved. For the least measure of the Spirit is true, and gives true judgment; but he that receiveth ever so great a measure of the Spirit, yet if he keep not low therein, but lifteth up himself because thereof above his brethren, may easily err himself, and draw aside others into his error.

Secondly, Care must be had that the conscience be kept tender, that nothing be received, but according to the light in the conscience. The conscience is the seat of faith; and if it be not kept close to the light which God lighteth there, faith is soon made shipwreck of. Christianity is begun in the Spirit, which keepeth out the fleshly part, with all its fleshly wisdom and reasonings about spiritual things; and as the beginning is in the anointing, so must the progress be. As the Spirit begins in the conscience, by convincing that, by persuading that, by setting up his light there, and leading the soul by that light; so that light must still be eyed, and according to its growth and manifestation in the conscience, so must the soul stand still, or go on.

The great error of the ages of the apostasy hath been, to set up an outward order and uniformity, and to make men's consciences bend thereto, either

by arguments of wisdom, or by force ; but the property of the true church-government is, to leave the conscience to its full liberty in the Lord, to preserve it single and entire for the Lord to exercise, and to seek unity in the light and in the Spirit, walking sweetly and harmoniously together in the midst of different practices. Yea, and he that hath faith, and can see beyond another, yet can have it to himself, and not disturb his brother with it, but can descend and walk with him according to his measure ; and if his brother have any heavy burden upon him, he can lend him his shoulder, and bear part of his burden with him. Oh ! how sweet and lovely is it to see brethren dwell together in unity, to see the true image of God raised in persons, and they knowing and loving one another in that image, and bearing with one another through love, and helping one another under their temptations and distresses of spirit, which every one must expect to meet with.

[That there have been ages of apostasy from the true Spirit and power of the apostles, is very manifest, both by the doctrines, discipline, and cruel practices of those, that would have themselves accounted the true church, and true believers and Christians. And that they have set up an outward order and conformity, and have used both arguments of wisdom, and also force, to make men's consciences to bend thereto ; this is as manifest as the former. Now that this has been an error, and a great error, is very manifest also ; because it is contrary to the nature of conscience, which is to be led by God's Spirit, not bent by man's wisdom and constraint, and contrary to Christ and his apostles' doctrine and practice, who would have every man

fully persuaded of what he performs to God, from whom he must receive the reward and approbation, or the dislike and punishment, for his answering or disobeying the light which God sets up, or causeth to shine, in his own conscience.

And the property of the true church government, and the practice and path of the true church in these our days, is to leave the conscience to its full liberty in the Lord; to preserve it single and entire for the Lord, and to seek unity in the light and in the Spirit, walking sweetly and harmoniously together in the midst of differing practices. Nay, it is not the desire of the church at this day, that any should come up into the practice, or holy order of the gospel, according to what the Lord hath taught others, but only as the Lord teacheth and leadeth them.

But, concerning what conscience is this to be understood? Is it to be understood of the tender and weak conscience? Or of the hard and seared conscience? For the conscience which God once made tender, may afterwards come to be seared and hardened. And is the church of Christ, which is guided by the Spirit and wisdom of God, taught and required by him so to act towards the hard and seared conscience, as it is towards the tender and weak conscience? Is the hard and seared conscience, which hath forsaken the true light, Spirit, and power, and turned against the truth, and is in a wrong, stiff, wilful, hardened liberty and subtlety, to be left to its liberty, and to that spirit which draweth it out and hardeneth it in a wrong liberty? Can there be any unity, in the light and in the Spirit, had with those who are erred from the light and from the Spirit, and are deceived in their own



hearts concerning it, and do but only pretend to it? Can they walk sweetly and harmoniously together in differing practices, who differ also in the ground, and are not one in the foundation, even in the true light and Spirit of the Lord? Ought not the church to judge this spirit, with its liberty and evil conscience, (for that spirit will make the consciences of all that let it in, evil) as well as, to the utmost, to cherish the liberty of the tender consciences in and to the Lord? Read and consider these scriptures following, Tit. i. 15. 1 Tim. i. 19. and iv. 2.]

If thou art a Christian indeed and in truth, preserve thy conscience pure and tender towards God; do not defile it with such religious practices, duties, ordinances, &c. as thou dost not feel the Spirit leading thee into; for all such are idols, and exceedingly pollute thee. And be tender also of thy brother's conscience, and be not an instrument to draw him into any thing which the Lord leads him not into; but rejoice if thou find him in simplicity of heart startling at any thing; for if he abide here faithful, his guide will in due season appear to him, and clear up his way before him; but if he be too hasty, he may follow a wrong guide, and that guide will never lead him aright towards the kingdom, but entangle him further and further from it.

Oh! how many have run a whoring from the Lord! How many have first lost the guidance of his Spirit, and then drowned their life in religious performances! How many have drunk of the cup of fornication from the life, at the hands of the fleshly wisdom! How many have filled their spirit with New-Testament idols and images! How many have even hardened their hearts and consci-

ences, by following the doctrines of men, their imaginary meaning of Scriptures, and the imaginations and dreams of their own hearts! Is it not time for men at length to turn back towards the Lord, to wait for the visitation and light of his Spirit; from whom they have gone a whoring, and whom in all things they have grieved? And if ever any feel and enjoy the guidance of God's Spirit, their conscience must be kept tender to it, and ready to hear and follow his voice, who speaks in Spirit to that which is born of him, which infallibly knows his voice, and (being kept clear) cannot doubt concerning it. "My sheep hear my voice," saith Christ: they know it, and the voice of the strange spirit they know not so as to follow it, but turn from it, both in themselves and others. But that which is not the sheep, but hath only got the sheep's clothing, cries out, How shall we know the voice of the Spirit? We may be deceived. Nay; that which is born of God, that which is the elect of God, cannot be deceived. Wait therefore for the birth of the Spirit, to which the Spirit is given for a guide, who infallibly guides it out of deceit. All deceivers are out of this birth, out of this Spirit; perhaps in some birth or other framed from the letter, and living in the imitation of some practices and ordinances from the letter, (under which cover they lie in wait to deceive,) but strangers to the life and power, and to that wisdom which begets and hears to God. Thus the Jews erred, and deceived their proselytes before the coming of Christ: thus the Christians (in name) have generally erred all along the apostasy; and, indeed, for the generality, have not been true Christians, but only a persecuted remnant amongst them; whose

life hath been nourished and preserved, not by doctrines and observations which they have been taught by the precepts of men, nor by the knowledge which they themselves have gathered, but by a little bread daily handed to them from the Father of mercies out of the wilderness; that was the thing which nourished their souls up to God, though many of them knew not distinctly what it was that nourished them, nor how they came by it.

*Object.* But is not uniformity lovely; and doth not the apostle exhort Christians to be of one mind; and were it not a sweet thing if we were all of one heart and one way?

*Ans.* Yea, uniformity is very lovely; and to be desired and waited for, as the Spirit of the Lord, which is one, leads and draws into one. But for the fleshly part (the wise reasoning part in man) by fleshly ways and means to strive to bring about fleshly uniformity, which ensnares and overbears the tender conscience; this is not lovely, nor spiritual, nor Christian. And the apostle who exhorts Christians to one mind, yet doth not bid them force one another into one mind, but walk together sweetly so far as they had attained; and wherein they were otherwise minded, God in his due time would reveal more to them, Philip. iii. 15, 16. He that hath, to him shall be given. And the intent and work of the ministry (with the several ministrations of it) is to bring into the unity, Eph. iv. 13, as persons are able to follow: and not to force all men into one practice or way; that is the way to destroy the faith, and the true unity, and at best can introduce but a fleshly appearance of unity, in such a form of worship and godliness as eats out

the power. And for being of one heart and one way, blessed be the Lord, this is in measure known and witnessed. The way is one; Christ the truth of God; and he that is in the faith, and in the obedience to that light which shines from his Spirit into the heart of every believer, hath a taste of the one heart, and of the one way; and knoweth that no variety of practices, which is of God, can make a breach of the true unity. This is the one way, for every one to be subject to that light of Christ's Spirit which he hath received from Christ; and every one keeping here, there is also one heart kept in the midst of all the variety, and diversity of practices. And the unity being thus kept, all will come into one outwardly also at length, as the light grows in every one, and as every one grows into the light; but this must be patiently waited for from the hand of God (who hath the right way of effecting it, and who alone can do it); and not harshly and cruelly attempted by the rough hand of man. —*From a Piece, entitled "An Examination of the Grounds," &c. 1660. Works, vol. i. p. 434.*

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“WHERE IS THE WISE? WHERE IS THE SCRIBE?  
WHERE IS THE DISPUTER OF THIS WORLD? HATH  
NOT GOD MADE FOOLISH THE WISDOM OF THIS  
WORLD?” 1 COR. I. 20.

THESE have always been the enemies and opposers of truth, and setters up of false images thereof in all ages; *the wise, the learned, the great disputants.* To these truth has still been mean and contemptible, their eye hath still overlooked it, and their ima-

ginations have still outrun it, finding out somewhat else in the stead thereof; for which they have been still able and vigorous to contend, and against the truth itself. And indeed how can the wise eye see that, how can the learned eye acknowledge that, which comes quite out of the way of its knowledge and learning, even in a path that it is not at all acquainted with? "Wisdom is justified of her children." Those that are wise to salvation, those that are learned in the Spirit, those that can dispute in the power of the life and demonstration of the Spirit, these know her habitation, and her outgoings, and can own her in every age, and in every dispensation and coming forth. But the wise and learned of this world are shut out of this wisdom, and in all their searches after truth cannot find her; and if at any time they do find and taste somewhat of her, yet they cannot keep her; but the wisdom, and learning, and strength of the earthly part in them, soon betrays and makes a prey of the simplicity that is in Christ, and of his pure gospel; which cannot be comprehended, nor will take up a dwelling-place with this wisdom, but brings it to nothing, tramples upon it, and keeps it down for ever, where it abides.

Three sorts of enemies, of the wise, the learned, the great disputants, truth hath always had. First, Of such as have denied the true form of knowledge and worship. Secondly, Of such as have owned the form, but withstood the power. Thirdly, Of such as have had a taste of the power, but afterwards erred from it; and so held that, which they had once a true taste of, in the unrighteous part, and likewise added to it by their own imaginations.

When Israel was in Egypt, (that poor illiterate company of brick-makers,) in bondage under that wise people, the Egyptians, with all their wisdom, could not own their God, or their worship ; but their God was an unknown being to all that wisdom, *Exod. v. 2*, and his worship and sacrifice the abomination of their eyes, *Exod. viii. 26*. And Janes and Jambres, with other wise magicians, withstood the appearance of God ; and Pharaoh and his people, with their wisdom, thought to have kept God's Israel from multiplying, *Exod. i. 10*, and to have held Israel still under their servitude, after the Lord was risen to stretch out his arm for their deliverance, *Exod. v. 8, 9*. And how did all the wise nations still watch to make a prey of God's Jerusalem ! how did they count the towers ! how often did they think to divide the spoil ! *Judg. v. 28* ; *Isa. xxxiii. 18* ; how did Sennacherib and Rabshakeh make her their own ! and when the Lord did at any time give Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers, how did they think to keep her under for ever ! The wise Assyrian, the Moabite, the Ammonite, the Edomite, the Philistine, the Amalekite, the wise Babylonian or Chaldean, thought to keep her under, as Pharaoh had done, even till their wisdom and knowledge perverted them also, *Isa. xlvii. 10* ; and the prince of Tyre, who was wiser than Daniel, *Ezek. xxviii. 3*, he also could insult over Jerusalem, and rejoice at her downfall and captivity, *chap. xxvi. 2*.

But to come closer ; come to Israel itself. That people, by all the wisdom it could gather from the law, by all the experiences it had had of God's power, by all the faith that was wrought in them upon deliverances, yet had not eyes to see, nor ears

to hear, nor hearts to perceive; but were a people that did always err in their hearts, and did not understand the way of truth and peace. The prophets among them were still fools; yea, the spiritual man mad, Hos. ix. 7. The priests were generally ignorant of the Lord: for though they had the ark of his presence, his tabernacle, his temple, altar, sacrifices, worship, &c., yet they did not know where he was, nor did inquire after him, but contented themselves with a form of knowledge and worship. And they that handled the law, knew not him who gave the law, and was the sole true interpreter of the law; but the pastors transgressed against him, and the prophets prophesied by another spirit, Jer. ii. 8. They were wise, and did abound in their own meanings, guessings, and gathered knowledge; but they knew not the truth, no, not of the letter according to the law, and according to that light which God sometimes caused to shine among them from his prophets. Hence it was, that that people with their rulers, their teachers, their priests, their prophets, were generally enemies to the prophets whom God raised up, hating, persecuting, imprisoning, stoning them, &c. The prophets of God (that spake his truth in his wisdom, in his life, in power, in the demonstration of his Spirit) they could not away with: these were fools with them; these were madmen with them, 2 Kings, ix. 11; Jer. xxix. 26.; these were poor illiterate herdsmen and ploughmen: they had learned men, that were brought up at the schools of the prophets, that could prophesy divine things, sweet things, that could open the law learnedly: these prophets and these priests the rulers cherished, and the people loved, Jer. v, 31, and xxiii. 26, 27; Ezek. xiii. 3, &c.

Yea, among that people, such as had a taste of the truth, as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram might have, (for surely it was not a small matter that could so lift them up to oppose Moses and Aaron in that manner, and to stand out the contest with them even in the Lord's presence, Numb. xvi. 18, but an apprehension of God's being on their side, from some appearance of his to them,) and as Balaam had, whose eyes were opened to see the beauty of the tents of Jacob; yet these, through the prevalency of the fleshly lusts and wisdom, become enemies, and try always to prevail over Israel, even over the truth, and over the power. The apostle Jude compares such to the angels that kept not their first estate. The angels that fell had a place and standing once in the truth; but they kept it not, they abode not in the truth, but fell from it, and so became devils, enemies to the truth from which they fell. So those that fall from the truth, from the power, from the living virtue whereof they once tasted, from the true wisdom which once appeared to them, and began to season and savour them, in their fallen wisdom they become the greatest enemies, the greatest accusers, the greatest opposers, and the stiffest maintainers of a false image of that truth which they once had some knowledge of, and some unity with. Thus it was in the Jewish state: now come to the apostles' days.

First, They had all the wise men of that age against them; all the wise Greeks, all the wise Jews, the learned men, the able disputants of all sorts. The Greeks could not find wisdom in that knowledge of Christ which they held forth, nor the Jews could not find power in it, 1 Cor. i. 22; and so



one accounted it foolishness, the other stumbled at it, ver. 23. There were many sorts and sects of wise men among the Jews ; but not one sort could own the truth, though they were looking for it, searching the scriptures about it, and disputing concerning it. The very thing then in agitation and inquiry among them was, *when the kingdom of God should come*. The king himself directs them where it was, that they might know where to expect and wait for it, Luke xvii. 21, and in many parables opens it to them ; but it was still hid from the eye of that wisdom wherewith they did strive to see, understand, and comprehend it. So that all the several sorts of wise men of that age, even those who were admirers of the law and the prophets, yet were strangers and enemies to the truth, because they joined to that wisdom; and to that learning and comprehension of the Scriptures, out of the sight whereof it came.

Secondly, For such as did own Christ after the flesh, such as were convinced by his miracles, (as Nicodemus and many of the honester sort of the Jews were,) yet Christ did not commit himself to them, John, ii. 24. He knew this faith and this owning of him, which was founded upon the wisdom and ingenuity of the creature, would fail; and so he would not own it in Nicodemus; but bids him look after the new-birth, John, iii. 2, 3. Nor in such as follow him up and down, upon this or any other fleshly account; but sometimes withdrew, and hid himself from them, Luke, v. 16; John, vi. 14, 15; and sometimes preached doctrines which stumbled them, and made them withdraw from him, John, vi. 66. And so in the apostles' days, there were many could get the

form, and gain advantage thereby to the fleshly wisdom, to withstand the power, 2 Tim. iii. 5; 2 Cor. xi. 13.

Thirdly, There were such as had tasted of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come, and yet fell away, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. There were such as denied the Lord that bought them, 2 Pet. ii. 1. Such as fell from the love of the truth to the love of their vomit, and of the mire of the world again, ver. 22; 2 Tim. iv. 10. Such as had a standing in the church's heaven, (like the angels which fell,) but kept not their habitation, but were swept down from thence to the earth by the dragon's tail, Rev. xii. 4, these are the noblest champions (in the earthly wisdom, and for a corrupted estate and false image) of all the rest.

Now as the prophets of God among the Jews had these enemies, and as the apostles also had these enemies, so all along the apostasy these enemies have been rife. The witnesses have a wise sort of direct opposers among the Papists, a wise sort of secret underminers among the Protestants, and also another wise sort of such among themselves as had some taste of the truth, but departed from the power of it into the earthly wisdom, into the earthly understanding; and this last sort fight more furiously and more vehemently against the truth, and are more subtle to assault it, and grapple with it, than the other two. Oh! there is no such bitter deadly enemy to Christ and his Truth, as he who once had some taste of the virtue of it, and is now turned from it into the earth, into the wisdom and love of the world, and yet still holds some of the notion of that truth (whereof he once felt the power) in the earthly part.

To come yet closer. There is in every man (not thoroughly sanctified) that wisdom which is not of God; that wisdom from which God hides his precious truths; which wisdom lies ready to catch every discovery and revelation of truth to him, that it might improve it, and grow rich and wise by it. Now this wisdom cannot attain to the knowledge of any of the things of God: neither can this wisdom keep the true knowledge; but whatever this wisdom catcheth, it presently corrupts. The true wisdom, the true light, the true knowledge of Christ, is like the manna in the wilderness; it daily comes down from heaven, and must daily be gathered fresh. The true light springs from the life; and it must be held in the life, in the vessel which the life forms, in the new bottle, in the new understanding; not in the fleshly part, nay, not in the natural part: for as the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 14, so neither can he retain them. The old storehouse, into which earthly things were gathered, must be burnt up, and not made a treasury for the things of God; but the new understanding, which is given by him that is true, 1 John, v. 20, which new-forms and preserves, and is all in the natural. Sink out of the earthly part, and read me, that thou mayst be able to say within thyself, and concerning thyself, Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer?

The wise part, the knowing part, the reaching part in every man, will be putting forth its hand to gather of the tree of life; but what hath it ever been able to gather? I know men may gather notions of any kind, of any sect, of any sort of profession, of any appearance or dispensation; but

who is able to come near the life, to touch the power, the truth, the everlasting spring, or any stream or drop of water that issues from it? And he who hath a true touch or taste thereof given him, can his wisdom add to it? Nay, can he so much as retain it? David had a true sense and experience of this, who cried out, "O continue thy loving-kindness to them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart." Indeed if he like not to retain the thing itself in his knowledge, he may improve the notion, and bend that to the temperature and disposition of the earthly part in himself and others; but this is not truth, but a dead image, or a dead remembrance of what once was truly living. Oh! how doth the soul that is begotten of the divine breath, that is born of the living power and virtue, depend upon God for his continual breathings! There is nothing that hath so much from God, and yet nothing is so little able to live without him. If he withdraw from it, it presently hangs down its head: nay, if he do but so much as hide his face, it is troubled; and all the fulness, which it immediately before had from God, is not able to keep up its life one moment; but it pants, and fails, and flags, and withers, until a new supply of refreshment be administered to it. And he that knows this in any measure will not wonder at the distress and misery of such a want of God's presence; and at their cryings out after the spring of their life, (even as the hart brayeth after the water-brooks,) though they should have fulness of all outward things, yea, and also fulness of knowledge in things of religion, even concerning all conditions and estates. The thing that I wanted

in my great misery, it was not outward knowledge, it was not experience of God's mercy and goodness; but this I wanted, the issuings forth of his fresh life, and livingly to know where to wait for it, and livingly to know it when it appeared: for it was still near me all the time of my darkness, and did preserve me, and appear unto me; but I livingly knew it not, but thought I would be wiser than others: for I saw many deceived, and so I would not own it in such a way as it then appeared in me, lest I also should be deceived like others; but waited for such an appearance as could not be questioned by the fleshly wisdom. And he that waits for that, and so despises the day of small things, cannot but refuse the little seed; and so, not being received into his earth, it can never grow up in him into a great tree; whereby the glory of the kingdom will be hid from him, and he shut out of it, when others enter into and sit down in it. Therefore, *he that will be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise*; let him receive that for his light, his king, his guide, which man's wisdom never did, nor never will, own. He that ever looks to enjoy the Comforter, let him receive the Reprover, the Convincer of sin, and wait for his law of judging him throughout the whole course of his sinful state and nature, passing along with him through the whole condemnation, until he arrive with him at the justification of the life, which the fleshly wisdom, nor any of his knowledge of the things of God (as they are held in the fleshly part) must never arrive with him at.

*Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*

The wisdom of this world is precious in the eye

of the world ; and the wisdom of God in his poor, weak, despised earthen vessels is still foolishness with them ; but the Lord so orders it, that he still justifies his despised wisdom in his despised vessels, and makes the wisdom of the world appear foolish to all the single and upright-hearted, who thirst after and wait for the revelation of his truth. Now two ways especially the Lord makes the folly of this world's wisdom appear.

First, In that by all their wisdom they cannot find out the true knowledge of God, ver. 21. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Though there be an exceeding desire kindled in them to know God ; though they take all the ways that heart can imagine to attain their desires ; though they study and meditate ever so hard ; though they get ever so many arts and languages ; nay, though they read the very Scriptures ever so diligently ; though they *labour in the very fire* ; yet what they get, what they gather, what they understand, what they comprehend by this wisdom, it is all but "very vanity," Hab. ii. 13. It reaches not the immortal, it nourishes not the immortal, it satisfies not the soul, it refreshes not the seed ; but only feeds and pleases the earthly part, the earthly understanding, the earthly mind, the earthly desires and affections ; even the man's part, the man's spirit, the man's nature ; which, though elevated and raised ever so high, is still but earth.

Secondly, In that all their wisdom cannot teach them to come down to, to submit to, to come into God's way of having their wisdom crucified, and that raised up in them which might receive the truth. This they can never learn in the fleshly wisdom. They may indeed come thus far even to

see that there is no way of entrance but by death ; and to seek death, (that they may enter into the life,) but they cannot find it. The seed of Jacob, in his seeking, misses not ; but this seeker never finds ; to this asker it is never given, and to this knocker it is never opened : and that is it which makes this wisdom in every appearance, in every sort of profession and sect of professors, so rage at the seed of Jacob, even because it finds itself still shut out of the life, into which an entrance is administered to the seed. And how can that which would fain have the kingdom, but rage against that which takes the inheritance from it ? How can every sort of professors but strive to slay the heir, that the inheritance may be theirs ? Were it not for the living seed, and the living power and virtue, which breaks forth in them and among them, the religion and worship of the first birth might pass for current ; but this it is which darkens the glory of all professions and professors upon the earth, even that living thing which God hath begotten in his people, and his living presence with it, and blessing upon it. At this all the zealous sacrificers, teachers, and professors, out of the life, rage and are mad, and would break the cords and bands wherewith this strives to bind them unto God's altar.

Now look over all ages ; Could the wise heathens stoop to God's dispensation to the Jews ? Was it not foolishness and abomination to them ? Or could the wise Jews stoop to the law within, to the word in the heart, (although directed thereto by Moses, Deut. xxx. 14,) to learn there to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with

their God? Mic. vi. 8. Could they wait there to have their hearts circumcised by that word of power, and so to be washed and made clean? Nay, were they not drowned in the outward sacrifices, temple, incense, new-moons and sabbaths, and such kind of observations, and could not hear the truth of the Lord as it was delivered by Moses, nor as it was opened by the prophets, Isa. i. 11. So that this people, seeking to know the Lord from the letter by this wisdom, could never come to the knowledge of him; but the place of his light and wisdom was hid from them.

Again, when Christ came, and the kingdom was preached, and the everlasting way of redemption and salvation made manifest, could the wise eye in the Greeks or the wise eye in the Jews, see it? Did not the Greeks shut themselves out by a wisdom above the letter, (as they thought,) and the Jews by a knowledge and wisdom which they had gathered out of the letter? How wise were they from the letter to reason against the King of life? *This man cannot be of God, for he is a breaker of his sabbaths. He is a Nazarite, and can any good thing come out of Nazareth? He saith, the Son of Man must be lifted up; but we read that Christ abideth for ever. He is against God's temple, against God's day of worship, gives his disciples such scope and liberty, as neither the Pharisees nor John gave their disciples; but reviles our strict and godly teachers and expounders of the law, calling them hypocrites, blind guides, &c. And mark with what a rough severe spirit he reproves them; whereas they call him master, and speak mildly and gently to him. Oh! what Jew in that nature, in that wisdom, in*



that spirit, but could find matter and occasion of stumbling at Christ, even from the law and the prophets!

And as they stumbled at the true Christ, so have all the generations of wise men since the apostasy, all the learned men generally (their councils, synods, convocations, and assemblies) stumbled at the true church, looking for some such-like building as had been in the apostles' days, and not understanding or observing how the Lord took down that building, (as it had been set up in the world,) and how he prepared a place in the wilderness for his true church, unto which he gave her wings to fly, Rev. xii. And how afterwards the false woman, or false church, got up in her stead, who with a golden cup of fornication bewitched the kings and inhabitants of the earth, Rev. xvii. 2, (even peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, ver. 15,) so that they mistook her for the true church, and went into her bed of whoredoms. Which of all the learned men, which of all the councils of the Papists, have seen this? Nay, which of the Protestant councils, or convocations, or assemblies, have beheld the state of the true church? Nay, have not every sort and sect of the Protestants endeavoured to build up some image or likeness of the true church; not so much as suspecting that she was fled into, and was to abide in the wilderness for a time, times, and half a time? Oh! what darkness hath covered the earth? Oh! how hath God befooled the wise men of every sort! the wise men of every age! the wise Protestants, as well as the wise Papists! the wise Independents, and Baptists, as well as the wise Episcopalians and Presbyterians! and how blind and sottish are na-

tions, and peoples, that still they think to find out the truth by having a synod, assembly, or convocation of the wise men gathered together! Indeed they are fittest to rear up an image to please the earthly part of man, and the earthly powers and interests with; but truth never came in by that way, but the wise and learned have still been shut out from it, and have proved enemies to it. And whosoever comes out of the apostasy from the Spirit and from the truth, to the Spirit and truth again, shall find nothing so great an enemy as the wisdom in himself, and directions from the wisdom in others: for that which God leads is a simple, a weak babe, a child to the wisdom of the world; and he leads it in a path which is wholly out of the line of this world's wisdom and knowledge of the Scriptures, as the path God chose in Christ's and the apostles' days was out of the line of the Jews' knowledge of the Scriptures. Such is the recovery out of the apostasy: it is hid from all the fleshly-wise men of this age, even as the entrance into the truths of the kingdom was hid from all the fleshly-wise men of that age. Happy is he who ceaseth from striving after the knowledge and comprehending of the things of God in this world's spirit and wisdom, and waiteth in the humility and fear of the Lord, first to be made a fool, that afterwards he may be made wise unto everlasting life.—1660. *Works*, vol. i. p. 474.

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SOMEWHAT CONCERNING THE GROUND OF ERROR,  
AND THE WAY TO TRUTH AND UNITY; *for the  
sake of such as are more Spiritual.*

THERE is no way to become an heir of the kingdom of God, but by being begotten and born of his Spirit; which blows upon the spirit of man, breathes life into him, and forms him in the eternal image, John, iii. 8; Gal. iv. 19.

There is no way of having this work of God preserved, but by turning to the Spirit which begets, standing and keeping upright in that which is begotten, and taking heed of the fleshly wisdom, which stands near to corrupt and destroy the work of God; tempting and leading aside from the truth itself, into some image and resemblance of it. And if this prevail, there is suddenly a departing from the living God, and a running after the inventions of the fleshly wisdom, which appears in the likeness of the true wisdom, that it might the better deceive.

Now when man is first breathed upon, and begotten towards God, there is but a little life, a little simplicity, a little light, a little power, a little of the wisdom of the true babe; but a great body of death, deceit, darkness, power and wisdom of the flesh, standing; and all these apply themselves to overturn and destroy the true work of God, by raising up a false image of it, which is easily done; but abiding and preservation in the truth is difficult, and alone maintained by that power which at first begat.

Now the power preserves through keeping out of the sensual and reasoning part, (where the corrupt

one hath his lodging) in that poor, low, little, childish sensibility of the life, which the Father hath begotten. Here is the entrance into the truth; here is the growth, here is the preservation and safety; which makes it so hard for those that are wise and strong in the reasoning and comprehending part, either to enter in, or to abide and grow in the nakedness, simplicity, and seeming folly of the truth of the gospel. O! what a deal is to be brought down, before they can be truly reached and convinced by the foolish and weak things which God chooseth to effect his great works by, 1 Cor. i. 27, 28. What a work hath God with them to batter their wisdom, and bring down their understanding; which the larger it is, the more it stands in the way of his light, 1 Cor. i. 19. And if they be convinced at any time, what an easy and natural return unto them doth their own wisdom find, by some subtle device or other, to draw them back from the plainness and singleness of the truth, into an holding it in the wisdom and subtlety of the understanding part, where the simplicity is soon lost, 2 Cor. xi. 3.

In the Spirit which begets, and in the truth which is begotten by it, is the true unity. Feeling that in one another, is that which unites us to one another. Every one keeping to that in his own particular, is kept to that which unites; and that is kept alive in him which is to be united: but departing from that, there is a departing from the true unity into the error and ground of division. And then that which hath erred and departed from the true unity, strives to set up a false image of unity, and blames that which abides in the truth, because it cannot thus unite: for that which

abides in the Spirit, and in that which the Spirit hath begotten and formed, cannot unite according to the flesh ; as that which is run a whoring from the Spirit, into an image of the fleshly wisdom's forming, cannot unite according to the Spirit. Consider this, O ye professors of this age! Ye blame us for departing from you ; for withdrawing from unity with you. We blame you for departing from the living principle, wherein our unity with you formerly stood, and wherein alone we can again unite with you ; and not in such things as uphold a fleshly and false image of the true unity.

Oh! that ye could hear the Lord's voice, who crieth aloud to the professors of this age to cease from man! Cease from man in thyself, O thou who hast ever had any taste of the pure grace and power of God. Cease from thine own understanding, thine own affections, thine own zeal, thine own gathered knowledge and wisdom from the Scriptures, with all the sparks of thine own kindling ; that God may be all in thee, and his eternal habitation be raised up in thee, and perfected, and thou swallowed up and comprehended in it for ever. Oh! what a work hath God to drive man's reason and wisdom out of his temple, out of his Scriptures, out of all his holy things! He that hath an ear, let him hear, for the sake of his soul's eternal peace. Alas! alas! how many stumble at, and blaspheme that, which alone can save the soul! There have been many dispensations of, but there is but one living truth ; but one substance ; but one arm of salvation. And he that stumbles at the thing itself, how can he be saved by it? It is easy misunderstanding a former dispensation, read-

ing it in the letter ; and so to miss of the salvation hoped for by it.

The Jews owned the Messiah, (according to the Scriptures, as they thought,) but rejected him in the way he came to save them in. Now if Christians have gathered such a kind of knowledge from the letter of the Scriptures as they did, how can they avoid the same error ; namely, of owning Christ according to the Scriptures, as they think, but rejecting him as he comes to save them ; rebelling against his living ministry, and the pure power and demonstration of his Spirit, because it appears weak and low ; because it doth not appear the same thing to them which they expect to be saved by, according to their apprehensions of the Scriptures ? Thus reading the Scriptures in another spirit and wisdom than that which wrote them, they must needs conclude and gather another thing from them than what is written in them ; and so make that a means to them of erring from the life, which was written to testify of, and point to, the living principle from whence life and salvation springs, and where alone it is to be had.—*From "The Root of Popery struck at,"* &c. 1660. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 27.

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#### ON MINISTRY.

[THE apostle Paul saith, "That God had made them able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 6.

After the dispensation of the law, which was a shadow of good things to come; and after the dispensation of the prophets, who foretold of better days, and of a better state to come, than the days and state under the law were; it first pleased God to send the forerunner John the Baptist, in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare the way for the King and his kingdom; and then to send the King himself, in the fulness of his Spirit, to gather disciples to him, and to furnish them with a competent measure of the same Spirit, to raise up a spiritual seed to him, in whom he would set up his kingdom, dwelling, walking, and reigning there; causing his light to shine from thence round about the earth, as from his holy city, founded upon his holy hill of Zion.

Now those disciples or ministers whom he chose to raise up this holy seed unto him, he made fit and able to minister his new covenant, by which it was to be raised; yea, he furnished them with such a power of his Spirit, that they were able through him to minister, not in the letter, as the old covenant was ministered (which left the people still dead; nay, because of the transgressing nature, made the offence abound, and so increased death upon them,) but in the quickening Spirit, which raiseth from death, and bringeth into the light of the living, to walk with the living God towards the land of eternal rest and peace. So that that which they ministered was Spirit, and that which they ministered to was spiritual. By the power of the Spirit, in preaching the living word of faith, they reached through the veil to that which lay in death; they stirred up a living principle, and ministered life to it through the Spirit, Gal.

iii. 5. And such as were born of this living principle, they taught to live in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, to be made perfect by the Spirit, and not to run back to the ministration of the letter (as was proper for the Jews in their day) after the manner of the former dispensation, but to keep in the living principle, to grow up in the seed, into the eternal life and immortality of the gospel.

Mark well, O ye Christians, who desire eternal life, the different way of ministration between the law and gospel! The law was a ministration of the letter, in which they were to wait for assistance from the Spirit, by which they might be kept in the faith of, and made obedient to, the law, Nehem. ix. 20. The gospel is a ministration of the Spirit, wherein they are to begin with the Spirit, and to go on with the Spirit; not to gather outward rules out of the letter, from what is written or spoken, but to keep to the living principle, and feel refreshment to that, in reading or hearing what is written or spoken by the Spirit. And thus the Scriptures being read, or any one speaking from God being heard, it is mingled with faith, and becomes profitable, feeding and refreshing the young tender plant, the living principle, and causing it to grow up into God: whereas whatever is understood, or received, or held out of this, feeds but the earthly, and doth but thicken the veil over the living seed; to which the kingdom belongs, and to which the gospel is sent to be preached, to raise it, that it might live, and thrive, and grow up into its stature, that so it might inherit.

“The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” said John the Baptist, Mat. iii. 2. “It is come unto you,” said Christ, Mat. xii. 18, that power of life which



was made manifest in him, was it; "and this kingdom is also within you," saith Christ to the Pharisees, Luke, xvii. 21. The Pharisees demanded of him when the kingdom of God should come? It cometh not, saith he, with outward show or observation; it cometh not that way you look for it; to wit, by the manifestation of an outward glorious king, to reign outwardly in the commonwealth of the outward Israel; but the kingdom is within you. How was it within them? Christ explains to them in another place; it was in them like a grain of mustard-seed; it was the least of all the seeds in their hearts. There were many great seeds of darkness there, but yet there was also one little seed of light. It was there as well as the rest, (though less than them all,) and did sometimes cast some glimmerings of light, and of its shining in the darkness, though the darkness could not comprehend it. This seed was also likened to leaven, which being received by faith into the lump, would leaven the whole lump, and bring it into the savour and dominion of the kingdom. Now the ministry of the apostles was to turn men from Satan's kingdom to this kingdom; from his large compass of dominion in the heart, to this narrow seed: from his great territories of darkness, to this little principle of light; from his great power of death, to this little weak thing of God; wherein the eternal power and godhead is made manifest, as this comes to be opened and increased by the Spirit. Here light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart; where it is to grow up, and from whence it is to be reaped after its growth to perfection.]

It is not preaching things that are true which

makes a true minister; but the receiving of his ministry from the Lord. The gospel is the Lord's, which is to be preached, and is to be preached in his power; and the ministers which preach it are to be endued with his power, and to be sent by him. The apostles themselves, though they had received instructions concerning the kingdom from Christ's own lips, both in his life-time, and after his resurrection, Acts, i. 3, and had received a commission from him to teach all nations, Mat. xxviii. 18, 19, yet this was not sufficient to make them able ministers of the new testament; but, before they went abroad to preach, they were to wait for the power, Acts, i. 4, 8; and when they had received it, they were to minister in it, that men might be converted to the power, and by the power, that the faith of persons might not stand in the wisdom of their words, (which Paul might have abounded in, as well as others,) but in the power of God, 1 Cor. ii. 5. And this was it made Paul minister in fear and trembling, lest the wrong part in him should minister; lest the earthly understanding part should be holding forth the truths of God out of the life, out of the power, and so he should convert men to the wisdom of the words he spake, and not to the power, ver. 2, 3. This was it he was sent for, to turn men "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God," Acts, xxvi. 18; from the spirit of enmity and death, to the Spirit of love and life: and this he was careful of in his ministry, that men might not run away with his words, and miss of the thing. And this also was the way whereby he discovered true and false ministers: "I will come, and know," saith he, "not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the

power: for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power," 1 Cor. iv. 19, 20. Many men might catch their words, and run away with them, and preach them; but they could not minister in the power. Now the kingdom which the gospel ministers are the preachers of, consists not in words, but in power. "God hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 6. The ministry of the new testament is a ministry of the Spirit, and it cannot be without the Spirit. It is a reaching to men's consciences "in the demonstration of the Spirit and power," 1 Cor. ii. 4, and 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2, which being felt in the heart, and turned to, this converts them to God.

The ministry of the gospel doth not consist in a bare opening of the letter (or raising of doctrines and uses from the letter, which the wisdom of man may easily perform) as the ministry of the law did: but in bringing men to the feeling of the Spirit, even of the eternal power of God which redeems, in turning men from the darkness to the light, in setting their faces towards the power. The gospel is the substance of what was shadowed out in the law; and he that ministers it must minister substance. He must have the heavenly treasure (that is, the substance) in his earthly vessel, 2 Cor. iv. 7; and he must give out of this treasure into the vessel which God prepares: and that he may do this, he must minister in the Spirit, and in the power. His words must not be such as man's wisdom would teach, or as man's comprehension would gather; but such words as God's wisdom prepares for him, and puts into his mouth. He that will be a true minister, must receive both his

gift, his ministry, and the exercise of both from the Lord: and must be sure in his ministering to keep in the power, or he will never win others to the power: but in keeping in the power, while he is ministering and standing in the cross to his own understanding and wisdom, giving forth the truths which the Lord chooseth to have him speak in the words which God chooseth, even in the words which are ministered to him by the power, in thus ministering he shall save his own soul, and those that hear him, even all who in fear and meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul. For, alas! alas! many have received words of truth, and apprehensions of knowledge, whereby they hope to be saved; but how few are acquainted with that knowledge which stands in the power, which alone converts and keeps alive unto God! Oh! how many souls are to be answered for by them, who take upon them to be pastors from God, who have fed the flock with words, *with discourses which they have made*, and have ruled over them with *force and cruelty*; but have wanted the love, the tenderness, the light and power of the true Shepherd! Oh! what will these do when God requires his sheep at their hands! Oh! that there were an heart to consider! Ye shepherds of England, little do ye know what is towards you.—From “*The New Covenant of the Gospel*,” &c. 1660; also “*The Consideration of a Position*,” &c. 1660. Works, vol. ii. p. 33 & 120.

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## ON PRAYER.

*True prayer is the breathing of the child to the Father which begat it, from the sense of its wants, for the supply of those wants.*

“THE wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit,” John, iii. 8. God, by the breath of his Spirit, begets a man out of the spirit and likeness of this world into his own image and likeness. He that is thus begotten, wants nourishment, wants the divine warmth, the breasts of consolation, the clothing of the Spirit, the garment of salvation; wants the bread of life to feed on; wants the water of life to drink; wants strength against the enemy’s assaults, wisdom against his snares and temptations; wants the arm of the Deliverer to preserve and carry on the work of redemption daily; wants faith to deny the fleshly wisdom, that so he may trust and feel the virtue of the arm of the Deliverer; wants hope, patience, meekness, a clear guidance, an upright heart to follow after the Lord; yea, very many are the daily wants of that which is begotten by the breath of God, in its state of weakness, until it be drawn up into the unity of the body, where the full communion with the life is felt, the heart satisfied, and the wants drowned.

Now the breathing of this child to the Father from the sense of these wants for his supply—that is prayer; nay, though it be but a groan, or sigh, which cannot be uttered, or expressed; yet that is

prayer, true prayer, which hath an acceptance with the Lord, and receiveth a gracious answer from him. And he that begetteth the child, teacheth him to pray, even by the same Spirit which begat him. In watching daily to the Spirit, the child is kept sensible of the will of the Father, and in his light he sees the way wherein he is to walk; he sees also the enemy when he is coming, yea, and the snares he is privily laying, and he feels his own weakness to withstand or escape: and in this sense his heart cries to the Father of spirits for preservation; for him to stand by him; for him to step in in the needful time, even in the season of distress. And thus watching to the Spirit, the life of a Christian is a continual course of prayer: *he prays continually*. This is the living prayer of the living child, which consists not in a form of words, either read out of a book, or conceived in the mind; but in feeling the breath of its nature issuing out from the principle of life in it to the living spring, which is the Father of it; who, by causing his virtues to spring up in it, nourisheth it to everlasting life.

But now, man who is not born of the Spirit, but (by conceiving some of the truths of God in the wisdom from below) hath attained to some change of opinion and conversation, he pretends to be this birth from above, though indeed he is born but “of blood,” or “of the will of the flesh,” or “of the will of man,” John, i. 13; and what God begets in, and gives to his true child, he will be imitating, though he be out of the nature and spirit where the true child is begotten, and where the true gift of the Father is received by him. He will be believing, though he hath not received any proportion of the living faith from the hand of the Father: he will

be forming repentance and sorrow for sin, though his heart be not turned from it; he will be hoping in God's mercy, although he be both from off the foundation, and from under the shadow of the mercy-seat; and he will be praying, though he hath neither received the Spirit, nor been taught by the Spirit to pray; and so being from that which should guide him, and teach him the truth and way of worship as it is in Jesus, he runs out into the inventions and imaginations, and sets up a way of his own choosing; which he having much considered of, and beat out by reasonings, and fenced about with arguments, he grows wise in his own eyes, and now verily believes it to be the way of God, and that he is able to maintain it against all opposers. Thus, one man, he is for a form; another man, he is against a form, and for conceived prayers; and each think themselves able to maintain their own, and to overthrow each other. But oh! that that ear were open which can hear the truth! that where there is any true, honest, upright desire after God, from the simplicity of the heart, it might not be thus betrayed through the subtlety of the fleshly wisdom, which lies lurking in the wise, reasoning, knowing part, to betray the poor weak babe. The natural man, the reasoning man, the understanding man, the wise man according to the natural wisdom, cannot understand the things of God. Here is no learning to pray aright, to believe aright, to hope aright, to mourn aright, to rejoice aright, &c. but this wisdom must be brought to nothing, 1 Cor. i. 19, and a man must become a child to all knowledge, as let in this way; and he that so becomes a child, is taught to pray

to believe, to wait, to hope, and all that is necessary to eternal life.

Now as the Father teacheth to pray, so he giveth desires or words (if he please) according to the present need. Sometimes he gives but ability to sigh or groan (if he give no more, he accepts that). Sometimes he gives strong breathings and plenty of words to pour out the soul in before the Lord. But if a man should catch those words, and lay them up against another time, and offer them up to God in his own will, this would be but will-worship and abomination. This I have known experimentally, and have felt the wrath of God for it. That is prayer, which comes fresh from the Spirit; and that is a true desire, which the Spirit begets; but the affections and sparks of man's kindling please not the Lord, nor do they conduce to the soul's rest, but will end in the bed of sorrow; Isa. l. 11.

Now as touching the Book of Common Prayer, or prayers conceived without the immediate breathings of the Spirit, I shall speak mine own experience faithfully, which is this; I have felt both these ways draw out the wrong part, and keep that alive in me, which the true prayer kills. And he that utters a word beyond the sense which God begets in his spirit, takes God's name in vain, and provokes him to jealousy against his own soul. "God is in heaven, thou art on earth, therefore let thy words be few." The few words which the Spirit speaks, or the few still, soft, gentle breathings which the Spirit begets, are pleasing to God, and profitable to the soul; but the many words which man's wisdom affects, hurt the precious life, and thicken the veil of death over the soul, keeping



that part alive which separates from God: which part must die ere the soul can live.

The true prayer is by that which God begets in the virtue of his Spirit, ("praying always in the Spirit;" Ephes. vi. 18; Jude, 20;) in the time he chooses: for the Spirit breatheth as well when he listeth, as where he listeth; and man cannot limit him when he shall breathe, or when he shall not breathe; but is to wait the season of his breathing, and so to "watch unto prayer."

Now if the prayer be in words, (for there is a praying without words,) then it must be in those words which he pleaseth to give, from the sense which he kindleth, and not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, or would choose to use. And indeed, in the true religion, and in every exercise of it, man's wisdom is kept out, and nailed to the cross, by which means the immortal life is raised, and grows in the true disciple. He believes, he hopes, he waits, he prays, he mourns, he rejoices, he obeys, &c. in the cross to the mortal part; even to the wise Egyptian part in himself; not as man's wisdom teacheth, or would teach, or can teach any of these things; for his sacrifice is still an abomination, (O wise man! abase thyself before the Lord in his Spirit, that thou mayst read this and live!) but as the life teacheth, as the wisdom from above teacheth, which breaketh down, shutteth up, confoundeth and destroyeth man's wisdom, while he is teaching his babe.

[So that, mark, prayer is wholly out of the will of the creature, wholly out of the time of the creature, wholly out of the power of the creature; in the Spirit of the Father, who is the fountain of life,

and giveth forth breathings of life to his child at his pleasure. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 420.]

From "*The Consideration of a Position*," &c. *Works*, vol. i. p. 120.

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ON SELF-RENUNCIATION—CHRISTIAN PERFECTION  
—SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

CHRIST, by his ministry, calleth his disciples out of the world up to the Father; out of the honour, riches, and whatever else is of the world. "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" John, v. 44. And the rich man, he bids him "sell all, and follow him." And the apostle John saith, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world," 1 John, ii. 15, 16. He that will be a disciple of Christ, must travel out of the earthly into the heavenly, leaving all that is of this world behind him, possessing nothing as his portion, but him who hath called him out of his country, from among his kindred, and from his father's house, to another land, kindred, and habitation. So that here they are pilgrims and strangers, sojourners and passengers, unknown to the world, and of a strange garb, behaviour and appearance in it; not enjoying any thing as the world enjoys; not using any thing as

the world useth ; not honouring men, or receiving honour from men, as the world gives or receives honour ; but honouring men in the Lord, and receiving honour from the Lord : and whatever they seem to retain of the earthly things, they hold as stewards under the Lord ; not using or disposing of them, as they think good, but waiting for the discovery of the Master's pleasure, who is to order, in his counsel and wisdom, all that is his own to his own glory. The law requireth a tenth part to be given up to the Lord ; the gospel requireth all, *soul, body, spirit, good name, &c.* ; even that the possession be sold, and laid at the Master's feet ; and he that keepeth any thing back, cannot be a disciple ; cannot be a soldier of Christ.—

The Lord circumciseth the heart of believers under the new covenant, to love the Lord their God with all their heart, that they may live : he causeth the plant to spring up out of the dry and barren ground, which he watereth with his blessing ; and he layeth his axe to the root of the old tree, hewing at it even till he hath cut it up : he engrafteth the Eternal Word into the heart, and by it is daily purifying thereof, fulfilling the good pleasure of his goodness therein, and carrying on the work of faith with power : and the ministry which he gave was for " the perfecting the saints," Ephes. iv. 12, 13, which ministry exhorted and encouraged believers (from God's promises of his presence and powerful operation of his Spirit in the hearts of his sons and daughters) to " cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1. Now that the corrupt tree shall never be cut down whilst man is in the body, that the heart shall never be thoroughly

circumcised to love the Lord, but be in danger of *offending God through the love of the creature*, this doctrine and belief springeth not from the pure fountain of life and power; but the reasoning part hath gathered it from its conceivings beneath the power.

The seed of God cannot sin (for as he is pure which begetteth, so is that pure which is begotten of him :) nor can man sin, who is born of it, and abides in it : and if God please to perfect the birth and the work of circumcision, what can hinder a man from being wholly born from it, and from abiding in it ? Indeed a man that strives in his own strength, either against sin, or towards holiness, may well doubt of ever having it accomplished ; but he that feels the eternal power beginning the work, and carrying it on daily, cannot doubt but he can perfect it ; yea, and is encouraged (by the feeling thereof) to hope and wait on him for the perfecting of it.

As for the instances of David and Peter, they reach not the thing : for though David and Peter did fall ; yet both David and Peter might attain an higher state before they went out of the body, than they were in before they fell. David was a great prophet, and Peter a precious disciple ; but yet there was an higher state to be administered, even the receiving that which the prophets prophesied of, and which the disciple was to wait for. The disciples who had known Christ, and had been taught by him, and had received a commission from him, to whom all power in heaven and earth was given ; yet were to wait for a further and higher state, even for receiving "the promise of the Father, the power from on high," that he that

was with them might be in them, John, xiv. 17. John was as great as any prophet, and yet he that was least in the kingdom was greater than he. Read the Acts of the Apostles; behold what a precious people was brought forth, even in the beginning of the apostles' ministry; how full of faith, how stripped of the world, how single-hearted to God, and one towards another! Acts, ii. 42, &c. and Acts, iv. 32, &c. What would these be, abiding and growing up in the vine? The cutting off of sin is necessary while in the body; but to make the committing of sin necessary while in the body, is a great derogation to the power of God's grace, and to the mystery of faith, which overcometh the evils of the heart, and the worldly nature within; purifieth the conscience from dead works, and is "held in the pure conscience." Oh! that men knew the power, and the faith which stands in the power! for then would they not judge it so impossible to be cleansed by the faith through the power. Oh! that light, that pure light of the Spirit, wherein the living blood runs, which cleanseth from all sin, and keepeth clean them that abide and walk in it! If this were but a little felt, such doctrines as these (which are gathered in the comprehension from words read, without being let into the thing itself) would soon vanish, and find no place in the heart where the power dwells, nor in the understanding which is renewed, preserved, and fed by the power. For the things of God are to be known and held in the understanding which is given of God, (which understanding is of the Spirit, and is spiritual,) and not with the natural understanding, which cannot receive the things of the Spirit, but only a carnal

apprehension and sense of the words of the Spirit, according as a man can beat them out with, and comprehend them in his reasoning part.—

Christ presenteth to the Father, when he hath purified the heart and mind, and made it fit for God's pure life and presence. He hath received the fulness from the Father, and hath freely given of his grace and of his truth to the sons of men, to regenerate them, to cleanse and sanctify their hearts, and make them fit for God to dwell in. He sitteth in his temple as "a refiner and purifier of silver," (who is like "a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap,") and when he hath purified his disciples, his children, his Levites, he presenteth them to the Lord, for the Lord to tabernacle and dwell in: when he hath thoroughly consecrated them, he presenteth them as kings and priests to his Father, to offer up "an offering in righteousness," and to reign with him in his kingdom, Mal. iii. 3; Rev. i. 5. And there were some so purified by the leaven of the kingdom, (which purgeth out the old leaven by degrees, even till at length it hath made the lump wholly new,) that to them all things were pure, Titus, i. 15. There were some "come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling," Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. Thus it was before the apostasy; yea, and after the apostasy there were some found standing on "Mount Zion," again, such as had learned

the "new song;" such as "were redeemed from the earth;" such as "were not defiled with women," (with any of the false churches, or their false ways of worship,) but had kept their virginity in the wilderness. If ye would know who these were, they were the "first-fruits unto God and the Lamb" after the apostasy, who were thoroughly cleansed by the spirit of burning, insomuch as "in their mouth was found no guile," but "they were without fault before the throne of God," Rev. xiv. 1—6.

The work of the Spirit of Christ in the heart is an inward work, and doth not consist in outward times or seasons, but in spiritual degrees and seasons; which when they are finished, the heart renewed, the spirit changed, the work wrought out; then the glory of the Father is revealed, the entrance into the everlasting kingdom ministered, and then there is a sitting down in the everlasting mansion, even with Christ in the heavenly places which he hath prepared; where they that are redeemed, and purged, and sanctified, sit together with him: and as the body cannot hinder his entering into the spirits of his saints, and his dwelling in them, no more can it hinder their entering into him and dwelling in him.

Now, there are several exercises of spirit, several measures of faith, and several degrees of life and glory. Some are under the clouds, some in the sea; some in Egypt, some in the wilderness; some waiting for his appearance, some in the enjoyment of him already appeared. In some the work of regeneration, of sanctification, of newness of spirit and life is but begun; in others it is interrupted and they come to a loss; in some it is much car-

ried on, even towards consummation; and some are already "complete in him;" finding fulness of satisfaction in Him, (in whom the everlasting springs are opened, to the full content of their hearts,) and bring forth fruit to him, to the full content and satisfaction of his heart. In the apostles' days there were those that waited for his coming, and there were those also that knew him come, and had received the good understanding from him, and were "in the eternal life," 1 John, v. 20.

Yet this doth not exclude growth, for the fulness is infinite; and though a perfect state may be attained in the perfect gift, yet there is a growth in the perfection; for Christ, who was perfect, and in whom was no guile, grew in wisdom, and knowledge, and in favour with God and men. And as God is infinite, so to that which is transplanted into him, there is no end of growth in him; but the tree which stands in God's holy earth, by his pure river of waters, shall grow for ever and ever into his endless life and fulness.——

To know Christ as the light eternal; (as he was yesterday, is to-day, and will be for ever;) to trust this light in its convictions, calls, and free openings of love, to feel its living virtue, and in that virtue to give up all that is of the earthly nature and spirit; to sell all for the everlasting inheritance; this is indeed the way to life. But it is not the doing of things which is of value; for man may imitate and strive to do much, and may go a great way *in forsaking all, and in taking off his affections from things*; (inasmuch as he may give all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burned, and yet it profit him nothing;) but it is the doing of things in the virtue, in the life, in the power which comes



from Christ, which is of acceptance with God, and of advantage to the soul. Every motion and operation of true life springs from the root of life, and hath the virtue of the root in it; and that which differenceth it from all men's imitations, and from all the likenesses which the earthly spirit can frame, is the nature and virtue of the root being found in it. Therefore, he that will be a true Christian, must eye Christ the spring of his life, and keep in the feeling of his living virtue, and in that offer up all his sacrifices of faith, love, and obedience to God; and he that will be a true minister, must wait upon the power himself, to be an instrument (in the hand of the power) to direct men to this, and to preserve and build them up therein.

But alas! this is the stone which the wise builders have all along refused! The builders before the coming of Christ, they got a knowledge concerning the Messiah to come; but being unacquainted with the thing itself, rejected both it at its coming, and also the vessel wherein it appeared. And the builders all along the apostasy got a knowledge of Christ come, and preached believing in him crucified as the way to life; but the living stone, the living thing itself, (which is both the foundation, the corner-stone, and the top-stone of the building,) they have been ignorant of, and ready to persecute every appearance of it. Christ can no more now appear in Spirit, than formerly he could in that prepared body of flesh, but the wise builders now are as ready to cry out against him for a blasphemer, a profaner of God's ordinances, a deceiver of the people, (yea, a witch, or one that hath a devil,) as the wise builders then were. "But wisdom" in all ages "is justified by

her children," and of none else. He that is born of the wisdom, he can discern the womb, and own the fruit and branchings forth thereof under the mean dark veil, whereby it hides itself from all the fleshly-wise of every age. "The kingdom of God cometh not by observation;" the wisest Scribes and Pharisees could not know it by all the observations which they could gather out of Moses and the prophets' writings; nor can any now know it by any observations they can gather out of the apostles' writings; but by being born of that Spirit whereof they were born, and by being formed in that womb wherein they were formed, by this means alone is the thing come to be known which they knew. He that receiveth the same eye, seeth the same thing, according to his measure; and coming to the life, wherein they received the truth, the words which they spake concerning the truth are easy. Thus as they were writ in the Spirit, so are they there alone truly read; and being so read, they become exceeding profitable to that which so reads them; but man guessing and imagining and reasoning in his carnal wisdom concerning the things of God, and so gathering senses and meanings about the words and expressions of Scripture, doth but build up a Babel, which the eternal life and power will throw down (whenever he appears) with that which built it. Oh! that men were wise to wait for the discovery of the true rock, and of the true builder upon that rock! that that city and building might be raised in them, which God alone can rear; that they might not be left desolate and miserable in that stormy day, which will shake all buildings, and foundations, and rocks, but our Rock; wherein all professors, and preach-

ers, and high notionists, and whatever sort else can be named, (who have stumbled at God's living truth, and at the pure appearance of his redeeming power, which in this age hath mightily broke forth, after the long dark night of apostasy, to the sight of every eye which is opened in the Spirit,) shall confess with tears, sorrow, anguish, and shame, that *their rock is not as our rock, they themselves being judges*. For though all sorts of professors generally own Christ as the rock in words, yet most miss of the thing; and the subtle enemy hath made use of a notion, or apprehension of the thing in the carnal mind, to deceive them of the thing, to keep them from feeling the eternal virtue, the living power of life in the heart, which is the arm of God's salvation, whereby Christ draws man's lost soul and spirit out of the grave of sin and corruption, up to the Father. But oh! how are poor hearts deceived! who think, by a believing of what Christ did, of a satisfaction he made for them while he was here on earth, though they lie in the pit all their days, though they carry the body of sin about with them to the very last of their time here in the body, and have not felt the arm of God's power breaking down their spiritual enemies, their lusts, their corruptions, and redeeming them from them; yet hope to be saved in the end, and to be presented without spot or wrinkle to God! Christ had the name Jesus given him, because he was to save his people from their sins; and no man can truly and livingly know the name Jesus, further than he feels the saving virtue of it; but he that effectually feels the virtue, he indeed knows the name, and can bow at the name, feeling his lusts and enemies bowed under by the power thereof,

and that raised up in him, which can worship the Father in the Spirit and in the truth. Oh! that the sons of men knew; Oh! that the teachers and professors of this age knew, what they have so long reviled and trampled upon! Surely they would mourn bitterly, kiss the Son, and escape the wrath. —*From the same Piece, Works, vol. ii. p. 127.*

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OF THE KINGDOM, LAWS, AND GOVERNMENT OF CHRIST IN THE HEART AND CONSCIENCE; *its Inoffensiveness to all just Laws and Governments of the Kingdoms of Men.*

CHRIST's kingdom, God's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, (for they are all one and the same,) is that seed of eternal life which God hath hid in the hearts of the sons of men, whereby he gathereth them back unto himself, bringeth them under the yoke of his government, ruleth over them, and reigneth in them.

This kingdom is likened to a grain of mustard-seed, for its smallness; to a pearl, for its riches, value, and worth; and to leaven, for its spreading nature. And many other parables did Christ make use of to discover it by: as, to a piece of silver, which the woman that lost it, lighting the candle, sweeping the house, and searching it diligently, at length found it even there where she had lost it.

Man, fallen from God, is become lost as to the Lord, and as to his own happiness in the Lord; being driven from his blessed presence and divine

image, life, and Spirit, into the earthly spirit, image, and life, which he chose : yet, in this earth; in this field of the world, God hath hid somewhat, even the everlasting pearl ; which, when man is awakened to seek, and findeth in the living breath; in the eternal light of life, it is able to redeem him ; it is able to overspread (he becoming subject to the laws, leadings, teachings, and power of it) and leaven him into the likeness and image of the pure life and Spirit.

O ! that men knew the gift of God ! O that men knew the purchase of the blood of Christ ! O that men knew that spiritual good thing, which Christ (who died for them) hath given to redeem them by ! that in that they might be united to Christ, and so by him be renewed and restored to God. For, as the Father receiveth none but through the Son, so the Son receiveth none but in that gift which he bestoweth from the Father. He owneth no faith, no love, no hope, no repentance, no obedience, but what springeth from that, and standeth in that.

Now, as man is born of this, is leavened by this, (as he becomes a fool in his own earthly wisdom and excellency of the fallen spirit, and becomes a babe, a child, a simple innocent, &c.) so he enters into the kingdom, being ingrafted into the root, through the virtue of this which is given him from the root, and so grows up in this, and this in him. And here is the new nature, the new life, the new heart, the new spirit, in which the unity and fellowship with God is again known, and the disunion with the world, the wisdom, the interests, the fashions, the customs, the fears, the hopes, the de-

lights, the joys of this world, and whatever else is of it. For Christ, as he is not of the world, so he calleth men out of the world; and they which follow him, and become his disciples, go out of the world after him; that is, travel in spirit and conversation from what is of the earth, from whatever is not of the Father, but of the world. "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world," saith Christ concerning his disciples, John, xvii. "therefore the world hateth them."

The laws of this kingdom are given forth in the kingdom, from the covenant of life, which is made there in Christ. They are written in the heart, in the mind, as far as it is renewed. There the fear is put, there the eternal wisdom is opened, there is Zion known, and the Jerusalem which is from above, and the laws of eternal life issue fresh from it, and are revealed by the life in the heart which is turned towards the life. There sin is reproved, and everlasting righteousness manifested in the light which cannot deceive: and as the heart is made subject under the yoke, so sin is wrought out, and righteousness brought in; and under the cross or yoke of life the blood of the everlasting covenant runs through the vessel, to keep it pure, sweet, clean, and fresh in the life.

This then is the government of Christ, to be subject to his Spirit, which appears and opens his will, in the gift of grace which comes from him; to feel his living breath, by which the heart is begotten to God, out of the region of darkness; to know the movings, the stirrings, the leadings, the steps of the Lamb, who is "the Captain of our salvation;" and to follow him wherever he goes,

doing all things that he commands, forbearing all things that he forbids, "without murmuring, without disputing."

Whoever will be of the inward Israel, the spiritual Israel, which Christ redeems out of the spiritual Egypt, and leads through the spiritual wilderness into the land of rest, must know his leader, must receive his Spirit, and follow it faithfully. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" he is none of the spiritual Israel; and if any man follow not the Spirit of Christ through all the travels in the wilderness, (but either sits down by the way, or lies overcome by any kind of enemies, and comes not to the end of his journey, finishing the warfare and fight of faith,) he falls short of the rest. O that men were awakened to consider of things as indeed they are! For, religion is not such an outward form of doctrine, or worship of any sort, as men generally (whose poor souls are deceived through the subtlety of the powers of darkness) are too apt and willing to apprehend; but it consists in spirit, in power, in virtue, in life: not in the oldness of any form which passeth away; but in the newness of the Spirit, which abideth for ever; in being born of the Spirit, in abiding in the Spirit, in living, walking, and worshipping in the Spirit; yea, in becoming and growing into spirit, and into eternal life; for "that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit." Oh! that the sons of men would hearken, that they might taste of the sweetness and riches of the goodness, which the Father in his free love hath opened in the spirits of many, and hath let the spirits of many into! O that men would suffer the wearing out of this earthly spirit and wisdom, that they might be-

come like God, be formed into and live in his image ! How long shall the destroyer in every age prejudice men against those in that age who seek their good with their hearts ! How long will the world stand in enmity against the generation of God's choice, and provoke the Lord to wrath against them ! Surely the spirit of this world will try it out to the very last against the Spirit of God ! For indeed the spirit of this world is not subject to the Spirit of God, nor indeed can be, and so cannot endure the government of his kingdom (which is not of this world) to be set up in the sight of it.

Yet, the government of Christ and his kingdom is not opposite to any just government of a nation or people. Christ's government is a righteous government of the heart, or inner man, chiefly ; which doth not oppose a righteous government of the outward man. Nay, those who are Christ's subjects, and singly obedient to his law of righteousness in their spirits, are more faithful to men, and more subject to any just law of government, than others can be : for their fidelity and subjection is out of love, and for conscience sake. But, this is it which offends the world ; men many times make laws in their own will, and according to their own wisdom, (now the wisdom of the world is corrupt, and hath erred from the guidance of God,) and are not free from self-ends and interests, not being gathered into that which cleanseth and keepeth pure the naturals. Now that which is of God cannot bow to any thing which is corrupt in man : it can lie down and suffer, and bear the ploughing of long and deep furrows upon its back ; but it cannot act that which is against its life. It cannot be disloyal to



its King, to gratify the spirit of this world; but what practice or testimony its King calls for against the evil and corruption of this world, it must obey singly and faithfully.

God in every age so bringeth forth and ordereth his innocent lambs and people, as that they are still offensive to the present age. The Lord fitteth them, and calleth them forth to be witnesses against the evils of the present age: how can they but offend it? Can darkness choose but hate the light, which speaks against it? How can darkness in power and dominion bear to be reproved by a mean contemptible appearance of the light, in mean and contemptible vessels? For God chooseth "the weak and foolish things of this world, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are." Look into former ages, how did God reprove the kings and princes of Israel? Not by the eminent priests and prophets, whom they expected to be taught by, but by herdsmen, by ploughmen, by prophets which they despised. How did he overcome the heathenish world, yea, and the Jewish corrupted state? Was it by wise learned men, (by the learned Scribes and Pharisees among the Jews, or by the wise Grecians among the heathen) or by fishermen and publicans? And how shall the recovery out of the apostasy, and the reproof of the antichristian world be? Shall it be by wise synods and councils of learned and orthodox men among them, (as they speak,) or shall it be by the learning of the Spirit, which such as these condemn? When God hath the rich treasure of the knowledge of his kingdom to manifest in the world, he chooses earthen vessels, weak vessels, poor contemptible persons: he appears there

(where the eye of man least looks for him) that “the excellency of the power” might appear to be of him wholly, and that the vessel might rob him of none of the glory of it. Now, the Lord, in this day of his great appearance in Spirit to the spirits of his people, hath not only chosen mean instruments, but mean things also, foolish things, weak things, the keeping on of an hat, the use of ordinary language, the appearing in mean habits, and despised gestures; yea, and in a foolish way of preaching; (indeed it is so to that which hath not the savour of the virtue and power of the life in it;) and how can the wisdom of man but stumble at it? Who would think that God should require such things, or appear in such things? *O living eternal power! how is thy mighty presence and appearance veiled from all that look for it in any way of man’s observation, or judge it with the eye of man’s wisdom! Verily thou art a God that hast hid thyself from the earthly spirit in its utmost wisdom; yea, in its utmost search after the knowledge of, and in the midst of, the highest profession of religion! Which of the wise, which of the scribes in this age, can discern any of the paths, or so much as one of thy footsteps?* O that men would fear before the Lord, and be sure to govern in that which is of God, and then they should harm none of his, nor hazard the shaking of their government! but whatever is not of God, both within and without, must fall in the day of God’s power. Oh! happy is he who is now made willing to part with that which God is determined to rend from man, that his standing may be in that which cannot be shaken! for there hath been a great earthquake in this nation, both of things without, and of things within;

and there yet remains somewhat to be shaken, both without and within, that the glory of God may have room to appear. O England! "kiss the Son, lest he be angry:" let all such laws and customs as are not of him, fall before him; and whatever is of him, let it bow unto him, (both within and without,) that his wrath break not forth like a fire, which none can quench; for the Lord hath mighty things to bring to pass, and he hath a mighty arm of power to effect them by, and what shall be able to stand before him that stands in his way?—*From the same Piece. Works, vol. ii. p. 143.*

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AN ANSWER TO THAT COMMON OBJECTION AGAINST  
THE QUAKERS, THAT THEY CONDEMN ALL BUT  
THEMSELVES.

It is commonly objected against us, That we condemn all but ourselves; all the Protestant churches, martyrs, and worthies formerly, (many of whom were valiant champions against Rome, and divers of them sealed their testimony with their blood,) and all sorts of Christians and professors, at present, who are not just of our stamp and way, though otherwise ever so zealous.

*Answer:* The Protestant churches, (as they are called, in way of distinction from the church of Rome,) the blessed martyrs, who suffered for the testimony of a pure conscience towards God, and all the worthies of the Lord in their several generations, who fought against the scarlet whore, were

accepted of God in their testimony against her, and are not disowned by us, but dearly owned and honoured therein; and for agreeing with them in their testimony in several things, as against deriving of a ministry from Rome, (which Luther wrote against, and John Hus prophesied of another ministry to arise,) and against maintaining the gospel ministry by tithes, or any other way of forced maintenance, which, till popery grew very strong and powerful, was known to have been free; and against swearing, &c. (Walter Brute said, The perfection of Christian men is not to swear at all, because they are so commanded of Christ; whose commandment must in no case be broken, although the city of Rome is contrary to this doctrine of Christ, Fox's Acts and Monuments, p. 460, 461. And see also, p. 495, Thorp's Testimony both about Tithes and Swearing.) For these very things, and such like, (as, for following of Christ, in not receiving or giving that honour which is out of the faith, and for testifying against the hypocrisies and corruptions of our age,) do we suffer in this our day, even as they did in their day, from the same spirit that persecuted them; which, though it hath much changed its form and way of appearance, yet still retaineth the same nature.

But all things were not discovered at once. The times were then dark, and the light small; yet they being faithful according to what was discovered, were precious in the Lord's eyes; and what through ignorance they erred in, the Lord winked at and overlooked, being pleased with that sincerity and simplicity of heart which he had stirred up in them towards himself. But if they were

now alive in these our days, and should depart from the sincerity which was then in them, and oppose the light of this age, they would not then be accepted of the Lord, but their former sincerity would be forgotten. For, the light shineth more and more towards the perfect day: and it is not the owning of the light as it shone in the foregoing ages, which will now commend any man to God; but the knowing and subjecting to the light of the present age. Even as, in these our days, there was some years ago an honest zeal and true simplicity stirring in the Puritans, especially among the Non-conformists of them, which was of the Lord, and was very dear to him; and had the generations of this age abode there, they would have been able to have followed the Lord in every further step, and leading of his Spirit: but departing from that, into some form or other, the true simplicity withered, and another thing began to live in them; and so they settled upon their lees, magnifying the form they had chose to themselves, till at length their hearts became hardened from the pure fear, even to the contracting of a spirit of profaneness; insomuch that they could mock at the next remove and discovery of the Spirit, as some new light; and so, by degrees, have grown persecutors of that Spirit in its outgoings in the people of the Lord, which they themselves had once some taste of, while they were reproached for Puritans. And the god of this world, who at first tempted them aside into the form, hath at length prevailed so far to blind them therewith, that they can neither see what spirit they themselves are of, nor what Spirit it is they persecute.

Therefore, let people consider the truth of the

thing, as it is before the Lord : we do not cast dirt upon any in whom the truth of God hath stirred and appeared in any measure in former ages, or in this our age ; but this we testify against ; to wit, the setting up of any form without the life : for, it is the erring spirit that still crieth up the form, to keep down the power by the form, and so by the help of it to bewitch from the Spirit, wherein is the life, and not in the form. This was the painted Jezebel of the apostles' age ; false teachers finely dressed up themselves with the form of godliness, and then under this cover they could deny the power, and make head against it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. How easy is it for them to appear in the form of the doctrines of the gospel, in the form of zeal, in the form of holiness, to pass in a nation for the true church ; and then to asperse them for heretics, who, appearing in the power, cannot but deny that form which is without the power. This is the great witch of this age, (even that spirit of zeal and devotion which is best clothed and decked with the form without the power,) which, though men, who judge of the things of God after the flesh, justify, admire, and much contend for in her several shapes and dresses, (some being for one, some for another,) yet the Lord is searching after her, and will find her out with his eternal flames, which will make her manifest, and all her lovers shall dread her burning and bed of torment. Now, as, all along the apostasy, this bewitching spirit, this spirit which bewitcheth from the power, hath crept up under a form of church worship and holiness ; so, the other Spirit, the pure Spirit of life, the Spirit of true zeal and fear of the Lord, hath still appeared more and more out of the forms.

Who were the best preachers, and most eminent Christians in the Puritan days? Were they not those, who least minded the form then; nay, indeed, who were most against the form, and persecuted for their conscientious stumbling at it? And who were the greatest persecutors then, but they who were most zealous for the form, both of the government and worship of the church of England? And where is the persecuting spirit next to be looked for, but in the forms which should next appear? And where likewise is the appearance of the true Spirit next to be looked for, but in those whom the Lord should raise up to testify against those forms, and to be the succeeding sufferers for their testimony, as the Puritans had been foregoing sufferers for their testimony.

Yet if there be any persons left among any of the forms which have appeared, (whether former or latter,) that have not lost their sincerity and true zeal towards God, them we own and have unity with, so far as they keep, or rather are kept, thereto. If there be any among the Episcopal sort, that in truth of heart desire to fear the Lord, and look upon the Common-Prayer-Book as an acceptable way of worshipping him, we pity their blindness, yet are tender towards them, and would not have the simplicity persecuted in them because of this, but rather cherished. If there be any among the Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Seekers, or any other sort, that in truth of heart wait upon the Lord in those ways, and do not find a deadness overgrown them, but a pure, fresh, lively zeal towards God, with an unfeigned love to his people, our hearts are one with this; and we cannot fight against this good thing in any of them, though in

love to them we testify, that their form and way of worship is their present loss and hindrance ; yet we doubt not but that the Lord, in his time, will make manifest to such the light of this age ; which is the very thing the people of God, in many foregoing ages, have been praying for. But this is our lamentation, that forms and ways of worship abound ; but the Puritan principle, the Puritan spirit, is lost and drowned in them all ; and that men are hardened against our testimony, not from the remainders of the simplicity in them, but because they are erred from the simplicity, and fallen in league with another spirit, which hath lain lurking in forms of knowledge and worship (to tempt aside from the simplicity, and to hide the sight of the life and power from the panting soul) all this night of the apostasy.

Now mark, how easy and natural it is to that spirit to enter into a form, to cry up a form, to set up a form in a nation, city, or country ; doubtless, it had been done in this nation long ago, had not the mighty hand of the Lord withstood it. When the evil and unclean spirit is detected and driven out of one form, if it doth not get another suddenly to appear in, and tempt with, it must needs lose many of its subjects. The false church is forced (as God discovers her nakedness and lewdness) to change her dresses and appearances, to new trick and adorn her bed : and then, as if she also were changed, and were now no longer the same, she comes forth again with boldness, and tempteth the young man again to come in unto her, Prov. vii. 16. And thus “ she casteth down many wounded ; yea, many strong men have been slain by her,” ver. 26, who otherwise would have “ pondered the



path of life," chap. v. 6, had they not been ensnared by her flatteries, who "forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God," chap. ii. 17. There is no more certain and ready way to suppress truth, and to betray the honesty which is singly searching after it, than to present a form of godliness or worship, as the proper way of meeting with it: for hereby the soul is lulled asleep with a false hope, until the freshness of its desire begins to die, and its life to wither; and then, the fleshly part easily grows into unity with and zeal for that form, which indeed is of the flesh; though it appeared and tempted, as if it had been otherwise. And how many have gone a great way towards hell, and have been deeply entangled and distressed in the chambers of death, by entering into this strumpet's church or house, which they then, through the subtlety of her deceit, took for the house or church of God? Prov. vii. 27. Consider the thing a little seriously. When the evil spirit is driven out of his strong hold of gross Popery, whither should he run but into Episcopacy? When he is driven out of Episcopacy, whither should he run but into Presbytery? When he is driven out of Presbytery, whither should he run but into Independency? When he is driven out of Independency, whither should he run but into Anabaptism? When he is driven out of Anabaptism, whither should he run but into a way of Seeking? And what is his end of running into Episcopacy, but to save alive that spirit which was hunted out of Popery, and could abide no longer there, and so the better (and the safer from being discerned) to reproach and persecute the other Spirit, wherever it appeared, under the nick-

names of Puritans, Separatists, Brownists, Round-heads, &c. And what is his end, afterwards, of running into Presbytery, but to save that alive which was hunted out of Episcopacy, and to persecute the former truly zealous Spirit (where it should further appear afterwards) by means of that form? Thus, the forms and appearances of things change; but the fight is still the same, the evil spirit still getting uppermost, under a form of godliness, and from thence shooting forth its arrows at those that seek after purity of heart, and cannot but testify against those forms where the impure one lodgeth.

This, then, is the sum of our answer in this respect: We are not against the true life and power of godliness, wherever it hath appeared, or yet appears under the veil of any form whatsoever. Nay, all persons who singly wait upon the Lord in the simplicity and sincerity of their hearts, whether under any form, or out of forms, (that matters little to us,) are very dear unto us in the Lord. But we are against all forms, images, imitations, and appearances, which betray the simplicity and sincerity of the heart, keep the life in bondage, and endanger the loss of the soul. And too many such now there are, which hold the immortal seed of life in captivity under death, over which we cannot but mourn, and wait for its breaking off the chains, and its rising out of all its graves into its own pure life, power, and fulness of liberty in the Lord.—1660. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 149.

## SOME DIRECTIONS TO THE PANTING SOUL,

*Which hath been long travelling in the Letter, but hath not yet been acquainted with the Power, nor hardly so much as entered into the Ministration of the endless Life (which is the Ministration of the Gospel) that it may feel the Spring, and come to drink there of the living Waters.*

MAT. xi. 28, 29, 30.

“COME unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Some sweet meditations sprang in my heart concerning this portion of Scripture; with breathings of spirit for, and rollings of bowels towards, those “that labour, and are heavy laden,” which I find drawings to communicate.

1. *In the gospel* (which is “the power of God unto salvation”) *is the soul's rest*. It is the doctrine of the kingdom, wherein is life, joy, peace, and everlasting rest to the soul in God. The law had the shadow of the good things to come; but under it was not the possession of the good things themselves, but only a labouring after them, and a mourning and load because of the want of them: but in the gospel is the substance, the enjoyment; life and immortality are there brought to light, and an entrance ministered into the everlasting kingdom, where they are felt, possessed, and enjoyed.

“The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” saith the forerunner: It is come, saith the Messiah: and in it there is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the pure Spirit of life.

2. *It is the will of the King of saints, that his people should enjoy the rest and peace of his gospel.* He would not have them always labouring and heavy laden, as under the law; but he would have their souls feel and enjoy the ease, the liberty, the sweetness, the pure power and eternal rest of his life. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him to preach glad tidings to the meek, liberty to the captives, life to the dead, the opening of the prison to the prisoner of hope, the binding up of the broken-hearted, the pouring in of oil upon the wounded: and he would have the souls of his people enjoy that which he came to bring them.

3. *Christ hath plainly chalked out the path of his rest to every weary panting soul, which he that walketh in cannot miss of.* He hath cast up, cast up; he hath made the way plain in the gospel, so plain, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, yet keeping to the light of the gospel, cannot err therein, or miss of the blessed rest thereof. How is it? Why, “Come unto me; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.” He that walketh in this path cannot miss of it: the rest is at the end of it, nay, the rest is in it: “he that believeth entereth into the rest.” The true faith, the faith which stands in the power, and which is given to the birth which is born from above, is the substance of the rest hoped for, and there is a true taste and some enjoyment of it given to him that truly believeth.

4. *The rest was once felt and enjoyed, when the gospel was known in power.* Believers, in the first

day of the gospel, before the night overtook that glorious dispensation, found "peace and joy in believing;" yea, they could rejoice in the Lord always. They felt the power and the life, which stood over all the powers of darkness, and brought good to them out of every affliction, and out of every temptation, and out of every distress: so that they, standing in the life, and in the power which had quickened them, and was present with them, they could "count it all joy when they fell into manifold temptations," knowing the advantage which would accrue to them thereby, and possessing their souls in the pure patience, till God wrought it out for them. They had an entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom: they received the kingdom which could not be shaken, and in it had fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, and in the eternal light the blood ran in their vessels, which cleansed them, and kept them pure; and they sat down with Christ in the heavenly places, even every one in the particular mansion which God had built in them by his Spirit. The fear of the living God was put in their hearts; the Spirit of the Lord was within them, and there his law was written, and read in the Spirit, and the treasures of his kingdom were opened by the key of David in the hand of the Spirit, and their souls had true satisfaction and rest in measure, and were travelling on towards the fulness.

5. *There is no rest to the soul to be enjoyed in the gospel from under the yoke.* This stands eternally: that which yokes down that which would be at ease and liberty out of the life, that is the soul's true rest; there is no other: and under the yoke it is enjoyed, and not otherwise; only when that which

is to be yoked down is consumed and destroyed, it is then no longer a yoke, but perfect liberty. But the same thing which is the liberty is the yoke: and under the yoke, the sweetness, the ease, the lightsomeness, the safe possession of the life is enjoyed. Mark this therefore diligently: the yoke is not one thing, and the liberty another; but one and the same. The power of God, the life everlasting, the pure light, the divine nature, is a yoke to the transgressing nature; but it is the ease, the pleasure, the rest, the peace, the joy, the natural centre of that which is born of God.

Now to the soul that hath felt breathings towards the Lord formerly, and in whom there are yet any true breathings left after his living presence, and after the feeling of his eternal virtue in the heart, I have this to say: *Where art thou? Art thou in thy soul's rest? Dost thou feel the virtue and power of the gospel? Dost thou feel the ease which comes from the living arm, to the heart which is joined to it in the light of the gospel? Is thy labouring for life in a good degree at an end? And dost thou feel the life and power flowing in upon thee from the free fountain? Is the load really taken off from thy back? Dost thou find the captive redeemed and set free from the power of sin, and the captivity broken, and he which led thee captive from the life and from the eternal power, now led captive by the life, and by the redeeming power, which is eternal? Hast thou found this, or hast thou missed of it? Let thine heart answer.* Ah! do not imagine and talk away the rest and salvation of thy soul. The gospel-state is a state of substance, a state of enjoying the life, a state of feeling the presence and

power of the Lord in his pure Holy Spirit, a state of binding up, a state of healing, a state of knowing the Lord, and walking with him in the light of his own Spirit. It begins in a sweet powerful touch of life, and there is a growth in the life (in the power, in the divine virtue, in the rest, peace, and satisfaction of the soul in God) to be administered and waited for daily. Now, art thou here, in the living power, in the divine life, joined to the spring of life, drawing water of life out of the well of life with joy? Or art thou dry, dead, barren, sapless, or at best but unsatisfiedly mourning after what thou wantest?

Well, ye that are dry, dead, barren, as it were without the living God, that know not the shining of his sun, nor the descending of his dews from on high on his tender plants, nor the care, diligence, and circumspection of the husbandman over his husbandry,—O wait for the quickening virtue, for the visitations of the day-spring from on high! that ye may be quickened again to God, that ye may find his life visiting you, his Spirit breathing upon you, that the seed of Jacob may be raised in you to travel out of this barren state, even out of this land of darkness, and from under the shadow of death to the land where life lives and flourishes, and daily distributeth plentiful nourishment and refreshment to all its offspring, who are taught to wait for it, and to feed on it in the holy place, out of the sight of the eye of the fleshly wisdom.

And ye who are still gasping after the living God, on whom the breathings of life still abide; who remain unsatisfied inwardly for want of the presence of the Lord, and whose hearts still mourn

and lament deeply after him, O consider what is the matter that ye have mourned so long, and sought so long, and yet to this day are at a distance from the thing ye have mourned for and sought after !

“ Strait is the gate, narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” The way of unbelief is broad, yea, the way of belief is broad also. It is easy for a man so to believe concerning Christ, or in Christ, (as his heart may call it,) as to miss of the nature of the true faith, and of the sweet and blessed effects which accompany it. It is easy likewise to miss the yoke, (to take up a wrong yoke, in the self-will, self-wisdom, self-interpretation of Scriptures,) or easy starting aside from the true yoke; but it is hard coming under the yoke of the life, and hard abiding under it. Again, it is easy mis-learning: a man may so read, and so hear, as that he may be always learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth; never come to the truth as it is received and held in Jesus; but may so get and hold the knowledge of the truth, as man in his wisdom may get and hold it from the letter. And if a man thus miss the way, how can he attain the end? If a man begin not in the true faith, in the living faith, how can he attain the rest which the true faith alone leads to? If a man miss of the yoke, or abide not constantly under the yoke, how can he meet with the true ease and rest which is in it, and which it alone can administer? If a man learn not the truth aright of the true Teacher, how can he ever reap the effects of the true knowledge? Ah, poor hearts! it is not enough to have breathings after God, nor to be very diligent and industrious, either in outward ordinances, or inward



exercises of spirit; but the way of the gospel must be cast up by God, and the soul led into it by him, and daily preserved by him, and must walk in the path which is proper for it to walk in, or it may mourn and cry all its days, and never meet with that enjoyment of God, and satisfaction in God, which it waits for, and cries after. It is one thing to mourn after a gospel-state, but another thing to be brought into it by the power. With my heart I own those that mourn after and feel the want of God, wherever they are; but this I know certainly, that they can never come to the enjoyment of him, but in that living path which the Scriptures testify of to be in Him who is the life, and which his Spirit is now found manifestly leading into. Blessed be his name!

*Quest.* But how may my poor soul, who have long mourned, and groaned, and been sick of love after my beloved, but could never attain to the satisfactory enjoyment of him, come to walk in his path, that so I may meet with, and lie down in, the power of life and salvation which the gospel holds forth to the true believer, and which I have been long sensible of the deep want of?

*Ans.* Thou that wouldst enjoy thy beloved, and feel the rest of his gospel, and walk in that path which leads thereto, wait to learn of the Spirit these things following.

1. *Know what it is that is to walk in the path of life, and indeed is alone capable of walking therein.* It is that which groans, and which mourns; that which is begotten of God in thee. The path of life is for the seed of life. The true knowledge of the way, with the walking in the way, is reserved for God's child, for God's traveller. There-

fore, keep in the regeneration, keep in the birth ; be no more than God hath made thee. Give over thine own willing ; give over thine own running ; give over thine own desiring to know or to be any thing, and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee, and be in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee, and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that, and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is its portion. And as thou takest up the cross to thyself, and sufferest that to overspread and become a yoke over thee, thou shalt become renewed, and enjoy life, and the everlasting inheritance in that.

2. *Know in what light it is to walk*, which is in the light of the Spirit. There the child is begotten, (not in Satan's darkness, or highest transformings into the likeness of light, which is but darkness ; nor in the light of man's wisdom, searching knowledge, or comprehension,) and there it walks : in that light it fetcheth every step and motion towards the land of life ; therefore hold no knowledge out of the Spirit. If any knowledge concerning the things of God be held out of the freshness of the Spirit, it presently proves dead and unprofitable. The spiritual Israel cannot travel without a spiritual light ; which light is eternal and incomprehensible, and cannot be held by man's spirit, but shineth fresh in the renewed spirit every day, and so is daily gathering it more and more inward into itself, comprehending it in itself, and preserving it in its own purity, clearness, and brightness. Oh ! this is it hath undone many, even catching at light from the Spirit, transplanting the image of divine things into the

earthly principle, and there holding of them in the earthly part, growing wise by them there, and making use of them from thence as a man sees good, and not seeing a necessity of depending on the Spirit for fresh light and life every day to every spiritual motion. Thus the traveller soon comes to lose the true path, and instead thereof travels on in a road of his own wisdom's forming: and so though he seems to himself to make a large progress, yet makes no true progress at all, but is exceedingly run out aside in a by-way; all which ground he must traverse back again ere he can come to the truth of his former state, or proceed in the true travel.

3. *Know and keep to the power*, which alone began any true work in the heart, which alone also can preserve it, and which alone can carry it on. Christ was made a priest, *not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life*; and every sacrificer under him (which every true believer is) is so made by the same power. The powers of darkness are continually at hand, which nothing can stand its ground against, much less walk on safely, without being in that power which is above them. The first coming to Christ must be in the power of the Father's drawing, and no believing afterwards is of the true nature, nor will avail the soul in its progress and travels towards life, but what abides in, and goeth forth in the same power. So the taking up the yoke, and drawing in it, must be by the power of the new life; and so must the disciple's learning be. As the master teacheth in the power of the Spirit the things which alone can be seen with the new eye, heard with the new ear, and received

into the new heart; so the scholar must learn and receive his lessons of life in the same power. Let any disciple of Christ be from under the shadow of the power, believe out of the power, walk out of the power, act out of the power, he is from that wherein his life stands, and wherein alone is his preservation; and ah! how liable is he then to falls, bruises, snares, and temptations of the enemy.

4. *Watch against the selfish wisdom*, in every step of thy growth, and in every spiritual motion, that that come not between thee and thy life; that that deceive thee not with a likeness, a shadow, making it appear more pleasing to the eye than the substance. Every step of thy way it will be laying baits for thee; and it is easy for deceit to enter thee at any time, and for that wisdom to get up in thee under an appearance of spiritual wisdom, unless the Lord tenderly and powerfully preserve thee; and if it prevail, it will lead thee from the path of the true wisdom; it will cozen thee with a false faith, instead of the true faith; with false praying, instead of the breathings of the true child; with diligence and zeal in thy false way, instead of the true zeal and diligence; yea, it will hurry thee on in the path of error, shutting that eye in thee which should see, and hardening thine heart against thy bosom friend: and being thus deceived, thou mayst be as zealous in thy age and generation against the truth, as the Jews were in theirs; and as certainly as they put Christ to death, and persecuted his apostles, though they cried up the former prophets, so certainly thou (under this deceit) canst not but act against the present dispensation and appearance of Christ's Spirit, and would persecute either the prophets,

apostles, or Christ himself, were it their present day now so to appear as formerly they did.

5. *Let nothing judge in thee* (concerning thine own heart, or concerning others, or concerning any way or truth of God) *but only the begotten of God in the heart.* Let the light in which thou art begotten to God, and which shines upon his begotten, be the only judge in thee, and then thou canst not err in judgment. Be not hasty, be not forward in judgment; keep back to the life, still waiting for the appearance and openings of the life. A few steps fetched in the life and power of God, are much safer and sweeter than an hasty progress in the hasty forward spirit.

Indeed, this is the true religion, to feel God beginning the work, and to wait on him for his carrying it on. The feeling of God's Spirit beginning somewhat in the heart, the heart's waiting on him for more of his Spirit, and walking on with him in his Spirit, as he pleaseth to quicken, lead, draw, and strengthen; this is the spiritual and true religion; and there is no duty or ordinance of the gospel out of the Spirit; but it is easy crying up and observing the likeness of any of them out of the Spirit, into which observance a strange spirit easily enters; and then that which was of God in the heart soon withers, and a contrary building is raised, and the state of the heart changed. Oh! wait on the Lord, that he may give you to understand these things; for the apostasy from God is very deep, and more provoking among the Protestants than among the Papists, yea, most of all provoking where it is most inward and spiritual.

*Quest.* But how may I know and keep to the begotten of God, and to the light and power of the

Lord, and keep down the fleshly wisdom and comprehension concerning the things of God ?

*Ans.* When God begets life in the heart, there is a savour of it in thy vessel, and a secret living warmth and virtue, which the heart in some measure feels, whereby it is known. Lie low in the fear of the Most High, that this leaven may grow and increase in thee. This is the leaven of the kingdom ; this is it which must change thy heart and nature, and make thy vessel (which perhaps hath been long and much corrupted) fit to receive the treasure of the kingdom. Now, while the savour is upon thee ; while the virtue of the life is fresh in thee, thou findest some strength towards God, with some little taste and discerning of the things of his kingdom. Know thy weakness, and go not beyond thy measure ; but, in what thou hast received, bow before the fulness, worship God in that, and be patient in what he exercises thee withal, waiting for more from him. And when the night comes upon thee, and thou perhaps art at a loss, missing the savour and presence of the life, and not knowing how to come by it again, be patient and still, and thou wilt find breathings after a fresh visitation, and a meek, humble, broken spirit before the Lord. Thou wilt see thou canst do nothing to recover his presence again ; nay, thou canst not so much as wait for him, or breathe after him, without his help ; but he is nigh to the poor, nigh to the broken, nigh to the distressed, nigh to the helpless. Oh ! do not with thy fleshly cries and roarings think to awaken thy Beloved before his season ; but in the night of distress, feel after somewhat which may quiet and stay thy heart till the next springing of the day.

The sun will arise, which will scatter the clouds; and He is near thee who will give thee to hope that thou shalt yet see God, and find again the quickenings and leadings of his Spirit. And in the day of his power thou wilt find strength to walk with him; yea, in the day of thy weakness his grace will be sufficient for thee; and he will nurture thee up in his life by his pure Spirit, causing thee to grow under his shadow; and he will be teaching thee to live, and to speak, and to move and act from the principle, and within the compass of his light and life eternal. Only be not wise to catch the notion of things into the earthly part, where the moth can corrupt, and where the thief can break through and steal; but know the divine treasury, where all the things of life are treasured up by the Spirit, and handed forth to the living child with fresh life, according to its need of them. And thus thy heart being kept close to God, and thy spiritual senses continually exercised about the things of God, it will be easy to thee to know the Shepherd's voice, and to distinguish the sound of the Spirit in thine own heart; and that which tries spirits and motions in thine own heart, will also give thee the discerning of truth and error abroad, even of the Spirit of God, and the spirit of Satan in others; so that thou wilt be able to try not only words, but spirits, becoming acquainted with the anointing, which savours all things, and will give thee to judge, not by the words, but by the power; for thou thyself being in the power, in the anointing, in the savour, it will become natural to thee to feel, to taste, to know, and unite with what is one with thy life, what comes from the same Spirit in others, and

to turn from the contrary. And thus thy life, thy growth, thy path will be sweet, safe, clear, certain, demonstrative in the Spirit, and past all reasonings of flesh and blood, either in thyself or others. The beginning of life eternal is in a higher principle than man can come at. Man's wisdom and knowledge of the things of God is but brutish before it. As thou comest into that principle, abidest and growest in that principle, thou art beyond man's judgment, and art able to judge man, and fathom his whole course as with a span; but art quite out of his reach in the lowest of thy motions, thoughts, or actions; I mean such as flow from, and are comprehended in, the life.—1661. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 235.

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CONCERNING THE WORSHIP OF THE LIVING GOD,  
*which he teacheth Israel, his people, who know him  
to be the Only True God, and the Worship which  
he teacheth them to be the Only True Spiritual  
Worship.*

BECAUSE the *worship of God* is a weighty thing, and there have been (and still are) so many errors about it, and the errors therein are of such dangerous consequence, both in relation to men's eternal estate hereafter, and to their right constitution, peace, and welfare in this world; and because I have had deep experience concerning the *worship of God* from a child, having travelled in spirit with my God for the right knowledge thereof, and in singleness of heart giving up unto him, according as he hath taught and led my poor, needy, depend-



ing soul ; I say, therefore is it on my heart to answer some few questions concerning the *worship of God*, for the service of such as both desire and need instruction therein.

*Quest. 1.* Who is the worshipper, the acceptable worshipper in the sight of God ? Or whom hath God chosen out, to hold forth his worship in the sight of the world, since he rejected the Jews with their worship ?

That God hath appointed a chosen people to worship him, that I pre-suppose ; though, if need were, the proof thereof might be ready at hand. It is not every man that would thrust himself upon the Lord, whom the Lord will accept ; but “ the Father seeketh such to worship him,” John, iv. 23. There is a capacity to be found in man, to make him a worshipper ; even such a capacity as may enable him to perform that worship which God requireth of him. Now this is the thing to be enquired into ; *What this capacity is, and who are the persons that are found in this capacity ?*

*Ans.* The worshipper in the times of the gospel, the worshipper under the new testament, is “ he that is born of God.” He that is drawn out of the dark spirit of this world, and formed anew in the light of God’s Spirit. He that is a Jew inward, he that hath the uncircumcision of his heart cut off by the power of God ; this is the worshipper whom “ the Father seeks to worship him.” This is the sort of worshippers God chose, when he cast off the Jews. God did not choose any one nation, or many nations, instead of that one which he cast off ; but he sent his apostles and ministers among all nations, to gather a spiritual seed instead of the natural. And these alone are capable of

setting up, and holding forth, his spiritual worship unto the world, and to provoke them to wait for, and press towards, the capacity of coming into the same spiritual worship with them.

Q. 2. Which is the place of worship ?

A. The only place of worship in the new testament, is where the spiritual worshippers meet together. The place is spiritual. As the worship is spiritual, so is the place where it is to be offered. It hath a spiritual consideration ; not outward, as under the law. It is to be offered in the Spirit ; that is the place. Where doth my soul offer its private worship to God ? Hath it relation to any outward place ? Or is it in the building which God hath reared up in my heart by his Spirit ? which building stands in, and is comprehended in, his Spirit. And I can offer his public worship in no other place, but in a building of the same nature, in an house built of more of the same stones. This, then, is the way of worshipping in the true light ; divers living stones meeting together, every one retiring in spirit into the living name, into the power which begat them, they all meet in one and the same place, in one and the same power, in one and the same fountain of life ; and here they bow down to the Father of life, offering up living sacrifices to him, and receiving the bread and water of life from him, and feeding in the rich pastures of his infinite fulness. In the holy city, in the living temple, which is built by God, of the stone which all other builders refuse, is the place of the worship of the living God, where the true Jews meet to offer up their spirits, souls, and bodies, a living sacrifice to the Father of life ; and where they meet with such a glorious presence and power of the Father,

as none but the true Jews were ever acquainted with.

**Q.** What is the worship, or what are the sacrifices, which the true worshippers offer up to God in this holy place ?

**A.** The gifts of his Spirit. These they offer up, and nothing else. The breathings which the Father gives into the heart of the child, they are breathed back unto him in the same spirit of life ; in the living sense, in the quickening power. Nothing of man's wisdom, nothing of man's invention, nothing according to man's will, nothing that would please the flesh, or seem glorious in its eye, is offered up here ; but the exhortations, or directions, or reproofs that spring up in God's light, in God's wisdom, they are given forth in the leadings, and by the guidance of his Spirit, and they reach to the hearts of those to whom he pleaseth to direct them. And this is the ground of such meltings, and breakings, and convictions of soul (and such-like inward operations) as are frequently found in such assemblies. For the living God is there, and the dread of his power overspreads the hearts of such as are gathered into and assembled in his name ; and the life springs in the earthen vessels, and the savour is precious to all that have their spiritual senses.

**Q. 4.** What is the season of offering up those gifts ?

**A.** The seasons of the true worship stand in the will of God. They are gifts, and the time of them stands in the will of the Giver. *Prayer* is a gift. A man cannot pray when he will ; but he is to watch and to wait, when the Father will kindle in him living breathings towards himself. So the

*word of God* (whether of exhortation or instruction) is a gift, which is to be waited for, and then to be given forth in the life and strength of that Spirit which caused it to spring. Indeed it is an hard matter either to speak the word of the Lord, or to hear the word of the Lord. A man may easily speak what he invents, and another may easily hear and judge of such words; but to speak the word of life, requires the tongue of the learned in the language of God's Spirit; and to hear the word of life, requires a quickened ear: and to know the times and seasons of the Spirit, requires both being begotten of the Spirit, and being acquainted with it.

*Q. 5.* Was this the worship of the former Christians in the apostles' day?

*A.* Search the Scriptures. Were not they come to the New Jerusalem? And where did they offer their sacrifices? Did they offer them in the old Jerusalem, or at Samaria, or the mountain where the fathers worshipped? Or did they not rather offer them at the Mount Zion, to which they were come; where the male of the flock (even the Lamb without spot) is known, and the blood of sprinkling felt? Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24, and 1 Pet. ii. 5. Oh! read! read in the life of God! the nature of the things themselves; and do not feed upon your own imaginations or the imaginations of any other men concerning them. Sweet is our God; his living presence is exceedingly nourishing to the soul; precious is his power felt in the heart; it is no less than life eternal to worship him in his Spirit. Oh! let not the enemy of the soul cheat your souls any longer of the precious things of his kingdom, with husky and dry food instead thereof, which only gratifieth

the earthly part, but nourisheth not the immortal life.

*Q. 6.* How came the worship of God to be transformed and changed so from the living power, into such dead formal ways, as generally worshippers in the world are found in ?

*A.* The enemy hath done this, by God's permission. The Lord was pleased to suffer him thus far to prevail against the truth ; even to get into the form of it, and there to beget men into the form, and then deny and turn against the power. And this is the way of antichrist in kingdoms and nations, even to set up a formal way of worship, and by it to fight against the true power.

*Q. 7.* How long hath this been done, and how long is it yet to last ?

*A.* From antichrist's beginning, all the time of his reign, until his overthrow. The formal way of religion will never be overturned, nor the power of religion find place in the earth, but there will be still countenancing of formal ways of worship, and turning head against the power and life of the Spirit, until antichrist's time come to an end, and the Lord consume him by the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy him by the brightness of his coming.

*Q. 8.* When shall this be ?

*A.* The Lord is about this work. He hath already raised up that which hath not been raised up for many generations ; and the Lord hath sorely smote down the Spirit of antichrist in many hearts already ; and he is fetching a great and universal blow at him ; at which stroke, when it cometh from the throne of God, the nations shall tremble before him ; and it will be as honourable to wait for the movings of his Spirit, and to worship him alone

therein, as now it is reproachful. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 247.

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SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, *conducing towards the further Manifestation and Opening of the PATH OF REDEMPTION and Eternal Life to the eye of spiritual Israel.* [Abridged.]

*Quest.* How doth the Son of God, or Eternal Word, in whom is the light of life, redeem man out of the fallen estate, out of the kingdom of darkness and death, into the kingdom of everlasting righteousness and peace in the life ?

*Ans.* Three ways. First, By wounding him in the natural and corrupt estate, and so breaking his peace and pleasure in the kingdom of darkness, and making him weary thereof. Secondly, By weakening him under the teachings and chastisement of the law. Thirdly, By healing and binding him up with the oil of salvation, in the power of the endless life, which is the gospel.

*Q.* How doth God wound him in the natural and corrupt state ?

*A.* By pursuing him with his light, which letteth him see what it is, discovering the evil and danger of it, and so weaning his heart from, and making him look out after and long for a redeemer. Oh ! how burdensome is the captivity to the awakened soul, when he hath a glimpse of what man was before his fall, (when he had a place and being in the life, with a spirit suitable to the life) and what he is now in his estate of estrangedness and alienation

from the life ; and whither he is going in his paths of unrighteousness, estrangedness, and alienation ! And while his heart is thus returning from the land of death and captivity, and longing after the redeeming power and virtue of the life, the enemy (the power of darkness) lays loads upon him, drawing him more and more under the chains and bonds of iniquity, to the utmost of its strength. So that now lusts abound, evils increase, temptations and snares multiply ; and in the land of captivity their strength is great, the soul weak and faint, and the redeeming power and virtue seems very far off. Now this is the estate of conversion ; when the Lord, in the midst of the powers of death and darkness, turns the heart from them towards himself, causing it to wait (under the captivity) for the appearance of the arm of his strength, to break the yoke of the oppressor from off the necks of the oppressed, and so to bring out of the land of death and darkness, into the travels towards the land of promise ; where the peace, the life, the liberty in the Lord, the rest, the joy, the full content and happiness is reaped by the soul, which follows the Lamb thither.

*Q.* How doth God weaken the creature under the teachings and chastisements of the law ?

*A.* By exercising him towards good and evil, and correcting him for his unbelief and disobedience, as he finds good, just, and necessary for him.

*Q.* How doth God exercise him towards good and evil, and correct him ?

*A.* When he hath brought him from under the power of darkness in some measure ; and in some measure set the spirit free therefrom, by the virtue

of his life springing up in the heart, then he exerciseth the heart and conversation towards the good and from the evil; then he giveth out laws for or against things, according as he findeth most proper to the estate of every particular soul. Now upon the giving forth of the law, (the life being in some measure raised) there is that which loves its teachings and pure path, and there is that also which draws back from it; and that being yet strong, there come many strokes and chastisements from the Lord, upon his own dear child. And these are bitter; and to be forced into the sin which it loathes, and in heart is turned from; and to be kept from the good which it longs after, and in heart is united to, (partly by the strength of the enemy, and partly by reason of its own weakness and negligence,) this is bitter also; insomuch as it crieth out day after day, and findeth this administration of the law almost as heavy a yoke as the land of captivity itself was, because of the weakness of it through the flesh, and the strength and advantages which the corruption of the heart and prince of darkness gather thereby.

Q. What is the benefit of these exercises upon the soul?

A. They melt, they break, they make the heart tender and fit to be moulded by the eternal virtue and power, into a vessel for the power.

Q. What frames of spirit do they work the heart or mind into?

A. Into very many precious ones. As for instance,

First, *They make the spirit poor.* The daily inroads of sin and corruption dashing against the holy and righteous law of life, the overbearing the



strong desires after purity, and forcing into the defilement, hindering the soul from doing what it loves, and making it do what it hates and would not, this makes it become poorer and poorer, and more afflicted day by day. Upon some visitations of the pure life, and some fresh virtue received, oh! how strong doth the soul seem! but when it suddenly forfeits its mercies, loses its freshness, and is plunged deeper in the pit than before, how poor and weak doth it then feel itself, trembling at the next openings of the life, and springings up of the virtue thereof in it, not knowing what weakness, captivity, entanglements, and misery from the snares of death remain to follow!

Secondly, *They bring into a mourning estate.* They fill the eyes with tears, and the heart with sorrow; yea, they cause an entrance into *the house of mourning.* To be accustomed to wounds, bruises, snares, grieving of the Spirit, provoking of the Deliverer, furthering and giving advantages to the enemy, &c. the sense of this overwhelms the heart with grief, and causeth continual sorrow and lamentation to that which is upright towards God.

Thirdly, *They bring into a meek, merciful, tender-hearted frame towards others.* He that is tempted, he that often falls, and is so often wounded and made miserable, he pities those that err; he mourns over the miserable. His heart is broken with the sins and afflictions of others, and he knoweth not how to be hard towards them, feeling such continual need of abundant mercy himself. It is the rich man, the sound man in religion, that is rough and hard; but he that is once thoroughly melted in the furnace, and made up again, is made but tender, and retaineth the impression of the

meekness, love, and mercy for ever. Now a broken estate in religion, or a state of waiting for the life, is much more precious than that which is rich and full by what it had formerly received, and still holdeth out of the immediate feeling and fresh virtue of the life,

Fourthly, *They bring into an hungry and thirsty state after holiness and righteousness.* Oh ! how the soul that is sensible of its filth longeth to be washed ! How it panteth after the pastures of life, the food of life, the living waters ; to appear before, and enjoy God, in the land of the living ! Oh ! how doth the heart, that is daily afflicted with its unbelief and disobedience, long for the faith that stands in the power, and the obedience that flows from the power. “ Oh ! teach me thy statutes ; show me the pure path of obedience in the way of life ; guide my feet in the way everlasting ! Oh ! write thy fear in my heart, that I may not depart from thee ; create a clean heart in me, and put thy Spirit within me to be my strength. Oh ! continue thy loving-kindness to them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.” Oh ! what unutterable breathings daily issue out from the broken spirit, towards the spring of its life !

Fifthly, *They bring into a pure frame, into a cleanness of inside.* “ Cleanse first the inside of the cup and platter,” said Christ to the Pharisees ; and he doth so in his disciples. “ With the mind I serve the law of God,” said Paul, when he cried out, “ Oh ! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver ? ” It is not conceivable what purity of heart is formed by God in his Israel, by the fire which he kindleth in his Zion, and by the furnace which he setteth up in his Jerusalem for though in the fur-

nace the dross still appears, the sight whereof is apt to grieve and afflict the precious heart, yet the melting and purifying sweetly goes on, and the soul which abideth the heat is effectually cleansed thereby, as is very manifest afterwards, when righteousness springs up with the quiet fruit thereof; but this cannot be discerned while the flames are discovering and taking hold of the unrighteousness.

Sixthly, *They bring into a patient frame*; fit to bear reproaches and persecutions from the world, who in the midst of all this weakness, misery, and distress, lay loads upon the poor soul, persecuting him whom God hath smitten, and speaking to the grief of him whom God hath wounded. God smites for want of obedience; for too much propensity to please the world; for not coming soon enough out of their customs, vanities, earthly ways and worships; and so soon as the heart and conversation is given up in obedience to the Lord, the world is discontent, and they smite and persecute because of the obedience. Now the more the spirit is broken by the hand of the Lord, and taught thereby to fear him, and the less strength it hath in itself to grapple with the persecuting spirit of the world, the fitter it is to stand in God's counsel, to wait for his strength and preservation, which is able to bear up its head above all the rage and swelling of the waters of the worldly spirit in the men of this world.

Much more might be said, but this may suffice. What is behind will be felt inwardly, as the soul waits on God in the leadings of the Spirit, through the teachings, chastisements, and distresses of the law.

*Q.* With what kind of things doth the Lord exercise the spirits of his Israel, to bring their hearts into these and such other like precious frames?

*A.* With several sorts and kinds of things, both outward and inward. As,

First, With oppositions, reproaches, and interruptions from the earthly part, both in the men of this world, and in themselves. There is abundance within, and abundance without, to resist, disdain, and interrupt the work of God in the heart, to oppose and withstand that which he hath begotten there; his leadings of it, and its obedience to him.

Secondly, With temptations from the enemy, even of many kinds, natures, and degrees, according to the present temper and condition of the soul; as either to doubt, and so despair; or be confident in the flesh from knowledge received out of the pure fear and fresh feeling of the life; so again, either to halt or draw back, or to be over-hasty and forward; so likewise, either not to obey and act for God, or to act in that will and wisdom which is against God. Now these, with such-like, are very numerous, frequent, and sometimes very violent and impetuous.

Thirdly, By withdrawals of the life and sweet presence of God from the soul. These are very frequent from the Lord towards his people, insomuch as he is called by this title, "The God that hideth his face from the house of Jacob," Isa. viii. 17, and xlv. 15.

Fourthly, By buffetings and prevailings of the enemy. When the Spirit is grieved, the life wounded, and withdraws inward, the enemy often gets ground, giving wounds and causing bruises to the soul; not only tempting, but finding entrance,

and taking in the snare the bird which once escaped, and was delivered.

Fifthly, By doubts, fears, and confused reasonings concerning the voice of God and the voice of the enemy. In the hour of darkness, (when the Lord seeth good to let forth the power thereof, and to withdraw the beams of his light,) how can that be clearly distinguished, which alone is known and seen in the light? How can the motions, drawings, and pure low workings of the life, be discerned from the false images and transformings of the enemy? Oh! the misery and anguish of the poor soul in this condition! how is the poor upright heart pained between faith and unbelief, obedience and disobedience, &c. not knowing when it is drawn forward or backward, or by whom!

*Q.* When do these exercises begin? and how long do they continue?

*A.* The Lord doth begin to exercise the soul even in Egypt; for after the promise of deliverance from spiritual Pharaoh, the bonds increase, the yoke grows more heavy, Pharaoh grows more violent and furious, the captivity increaseth much; but there is no sight of redemption at all, save to that eye which is weak, and easily overborne in Israel. But the exercises are much more full and sharp in the wilderness, where Israel is led about, tried, afflicted, consumed day by day, as if he should never come to the holy land, nor any of Israel be left to enter therein. Yea, in Canaan, in the rich possession, in the plenteous overflowings of the life, there is still somewhat left to try Israel, and bring him low with, if at any time he be exalted with the glory and fulness of his own estate, and begin to forget his God,

**Q.** Why doth God thus exercise his Israel? Why doth he lead them in such a knotty, and not in a more easy and ready way to the everlasting possession, and to the fulness thereof?

**A.** Because their estate and condition requires it. They could not be so purified and fitted for the life; their vessels would not be so enlarged to receive it in, nor they so safely enjoy it, were it not for this course of wisdom, wherein God exercises and trieth every cranny of their spirits, until he hath perfected them, and stopped up the entrance of death every where.

**Q.** How do these exercises purify and enlarge them?

**A.** First, They try the strength and virtue of the life in them, and discover to them their further want thereof. In the time of the soul's prosperity there seems to be enough; but the day of distress maketh manifest the estate and condition as it is. Then the faith, the love, the patience, the meekness, the constancy, and chasteness to the spouse (loving him, and cleaving to him above all, and in all) many times is found to be less than it was judged to be.

Secondly, It brings to a waiting on God for support, and for receiving of more from him. Then the life breathes vigorously, and the soul hankers after, cleaves to, and sees its need both of the presence and increase of the virtue of the life. Then he that was rich becomes poor, and he that was full becomes empty and nothing; yea, he that had enough to live on and to spare is now pressed with hunger, want, and penury.

Thirdly, It prepares for a clearer entrance into, and safer enjoyment of, the fulness. As the soul

is more emptied of the strength and riches it received from God, so it is more prepared to enter into, and live in the Pure Being itself. For nothing can live there which veils. In the life God was, and is, and is to be all in all for ever. That, therefore, which enters there, and lives and abides there, must be poor, empty, naked, nothing, and remain nothing for ever. As it gathers any thing from the fulness, and becomes any thing in itself, thereby it is shut out.

*Q.* How doth God heal and bind up that which he hath wounded and broken to pieces with his various and frequent exercises?

*A.* By opening the power of the endless life, in the vessel which he hath thoroughly purified and prepared, and filling it with the power. The free power of life, that is the gospel. To the meek, to the broken-hearted, to the cleansed it is prophesied; and when the work of cleansing is finished, the wound made wide enough, and kept open long enough, and the death to the first husband fully accomplished, then the perfect oil is perfectly poured in, and everlasting health and salvation obtained. This is the end which God aims at in the visitations and leadings of his seed; happy are they that pass through the vale of misery, and drink off the dregs of *the cup of trembling*, not fainting nor sitting down by the way, but following the faithful Shepherd and Leader of Israel till they arrive here.

*Q.* What is the great danger in the path of life?

*A.* The great danger is of ascending a step higher than the present estate and condition will bear; for by this means the aspiring mind gets up, and is exalted, and holdeth somewhat received

from the life, out of the pure fear which preserves the heart clean, and out of the sensible feeling which keepeth fresh and living to God. And then the simplicity is betrayed, and a wrong spirit lives, and a wrong eye is opened; so that there is nothing now but [departure] from the life, and the heart exalted and conceited in the way of its [departure,] as if it were the pure and most excellent way of enjoyment of the life.

*Q.* What way is there of preservation herefrom?

*A.* Watching to the life, keeping low in the fear, and close to the feeling. Here the aspirer is shut out, or soon espied at his beginning to enter, and then the living cross received, which crucifieth and driveth him back. And indeed there is no way of safety in the travels towards the enjoyment of life, or under any enjoyment before the state of perfect death, but under the cross to that spirit and nature which would dwell there, and please itself therewith, and be somewhat therein, and so forget the pure everlasting spring adulterating with the streamings forth of it.

Man was made for God to be a vessel of his pleasure, to receive his content, enjoyment, and happiness by reflexion. So that man's proper work was to watch to the spring from whence he came; to be disposed of, ordered, and to be according to his pleasure. This was natural to man before his fall, till a corrupt spirit by deceit entered him, and corrupted him. And while any thing of that corrupt spirit or fallen nature remains, he is apt to aspire in the self-hood, and to seek the enjoyment of what comes from the fountain (yea, and the fountain itself also) in and according to the will and wisdom of the self-hood. And here



let man receive what gifts soever from God, be advanced to ever so high an habitation in the land of life, yea, have the very fountain itself given him ; yet by this means he will corrupt, lose the gift or spring, be separated from it, and adulterate with what he can still retain or gather in his own principle. And here do deep travellers lose their way, falling from their portion in the land of life, and from their enjoyments in the paradise of the pleasure of the life, into the earthly and sensual spirit, holding things wisely and richly there in the earthly principle, not knowing the remove of their habitation thither, nor thinking that they are there.

He that readeth these things, let him not strive to comprehend them ; but be content with what he feeleth thereof suitable to his own present estate : and as the life grows in him, and he in the life, and he comes to meet with the things and exercises spoken of, the words and experiences concerning them will of themselves open to him, and be useful and serviceable to him so far as the Lord pleaseth, he keeping to the leadings, savour, and principle of life in himself, wherein alone his knowledge, sight, growth, and experiences are safe.

Now he that would travel safely in spirit unto the land of life, let him wait to have these things following written by the finger of God in his heart, and the sense and impression thereof preserved fresh in him.

First, It is the free grace of God which begins the work of redemption, which causeth the light to shine, which worketh the repentance or turning from the dead state, and also the belief in, and turning towards the living God.

Secondly, It is the same grace alone that can

preserve and cause the plant of grace to grow. If there be a withdrawing of the light, a withholding of the free influence, that which depends thereupon cannot retain its freshness; which the Lord may do as often as he pleaseth, for the chastisement of the rebellious part, or for the trial of his pure life and virtue in his plants.

Thirdly, The grace of God visiting the soul in the death, in the darkness, in the fallen estate, begetteth life anew in it, maketh it in some measure light in the Lord, openeth an eye in it to see the things of God, an ear to hear and distinguish between the sound of life and of death, an heart to turn from and refuse the vanity, and to turn towards and abide in the living substance.

Fourthly, The Spirit of God carries on the work of redemption, by drawing, leading, and acting the quickened soul; by exercising that which he hath begotten in the life, under the law of the life. Thus the life draws the soul daily nearer and nearer towards the everlasting spring, and from the fading emptiness of sin, vanity, and the creaturehood; and the soul, by the enlivening virtue, daily follows on after the life, in the leadings, spirit, and power thereof. There is a living soul begotten by the virtue of the grace, and the living soul daily lives in the grace, and travels in the virtue thereof from the unbelief to the faith, from the enmity to the love, from the perverseness to the straightness, from the iniquity to the righteousness, even from all the territories of the darkness, and also from the weak measures and degrees of the grace and life towards the fulness itself, even until it perfectly centre in, and be fully filled therewith.

Fifthly, Where there is a stopping of the virtue

received from the grace, and not an answer in the heart, there the work of redemption is stopped. If the soul follow not in the drawing, the drawing is lost as to it. If the ear open not to hear the voice of the Word, or if it be not mixed with faith in the heart hearing, it proves ineffectual. If strength issue forth from the Lord, yet if the soul receive not the strength which issueth forth and bubbleth up in it, or answer it not in giving up to it, and travelling on, the soul abideth where it was at least, if it also retire not backward from that estate and condition whereto the life had advanced it: for if the virtue of the life and grace be refused, there is an advantage given to death to re-enter, and gain ground by its contrary virtue and power.

Sixthly, Mark therefore diligently how the Lord doth carry on the dispensation of his love and free grace, even as if there were much done by the strength and diligence of the creature. What wounding of itself by repentance! What striving to believe! What wrestling against enemies, and for the influences of the grace, and to keep the hope up, and the distrust out! What strict watching and waiting, even as if the creature did work out its whole salvation!

Seventhly, Though the creature seemeth to do much itself, (having received life from the grace, and acting abundantly towards God in the grace,) yet it is the grace and virtue which comes from the Creator (who is also the Redemer) which indeed doth all: for though the creature repent really, and turn from the darkness with its whole heart, yet the repentance is of the virtue which flows from the grace, and not of the creature which receives the grace: and so likewise in the faith, the

love, the obedience, the meekness, the patience, the watching, the waiting, the hoping, &c. Yea, the very receiving the grace is not of the creature, but of the grace; for the creature is dead until it be visited by the grace; and by the visitation of the grace alone is made alive, and able to receive it.

Behold then the *mystery of redemption*. God is all in redemption; God doth all therein as fully as in creation, (it is a new creation,) even the whole work thereof; yet the creature quickened and renewed is in unity with him in his operations, Phil. ii. 12, 13. He whose eyes are opened can read the mystery, and in true understanding say, (if he hath been led, and hath proceeded so far,) "I am able to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me; yet not I, but the grace of God in me." Now to bring the creature to this, the Lord exerciseth it daily in obedience unto him, in the life and virtue which floweth forth from him, causing it to feel its weakness as it forgets the virtue, or aspires to live of itself on the virtue received, out of the sensible feeling of its dependence upon the spring. And indeed the virtue that comes from God can alone answer God, and the creature is only accepted with the Spring and Father of life, as it is found therein.

There are three things in redemption :

First, There is the issuing out of the free grace, love, virtue, and divine power towards the creature.

Secondly, There is the opening of the estate of the creature thereby, convincing and drawing it out of the alienation from the life, towards unity with the life.

*Thirdly*, There is the following of the creature after the life, in the quickening virtue of the drawings, through all the snares, temptations, diversions and oppositions of the enemy.

Now there is no hindering of the issuing forth of the free grace towards the creature, or of those convictions and inclinations of the creature to follow, which necessarily ensue thereupon. But the pursuit and progress of the creature (or its abiding with the quickening virtue and power) may many ways be interrupted and diverted, and so the creature drawn from under the influence of the free covenant: for though the covenant be free, yet the creature only partakes of it, as it is drawn into it, and preserved in it.

Therefore let those fear who feel the power and redeeming virtue, and know, that notwithstanding the free and certain promise to the seed, yet the creature is as clay in the hands of the potter, which may be made a vessel of honour or dishonour, as he pleaseth to favour it, or take occasion against it. And whoever would pass through the work of salvation and redemption, unto the salvation and redemption itself, in the living virtue received from the life, let him keep fast hold on the good pleasure, and in it give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, working out his salvation with fear and trembling, because God worketh in him both to will and to do of his good will. And walking diligently and industriously in this path, he may attain the seal of the redemption, even that mark which can never be worn out, and to full assurance of faith in the redeeming power; though it is also possible for him afterwards, through much negligence, and

grieving the Spirit whereby he was sealed, to lose the sight of the mark, and the comfort of the assurance, which was once fresh and clear in his spirit.

Now this is the whole of man; to wait on the ministration of the life to him in his present estate, whether he be yet in the estate of nature, or under the law, or under grace. To know whence his redemption springs, and to wait on the redeeming arm for the beginnings, progress, and perfecting of it; and if it be in the feeling of that virtue, it is enough; or if it be kept longing or panting after it, it is well; yea, if there be but a desire in him after a thirst, there is hope; nay, if there be but the least feeling of his dead, barren, and senseless estate, there is some life in him, which the Lord loves, and will find a time to express his bowels towards: yea, that which is wholly in the darkness, and shut up in the pit, the Lord hath bowels in him towards, and after many days may please to visit. Oh! the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of the riches of the mercy and love of God! Who knows his yearnings towards souls, and his ways of visiting and redeeming? O my soul! hope thou in the Lord for evermore, and leave not breathing towards him till thou and his whole creation be filled and satisfied with him, and then fetch the full breath of life in him for ever!

#### POSTSCRIPT.

I HAVE been treating of the inward work as it is wrought in the heart by the power, and brought to the sensible experimental knowledge of the creature; yet would not be so understood as if I

made void what was done without by Christ in his own person, or any of those ends and purposes for which it was wrought, and appointed so to be done by the Father: though this I know, that the knowledge of those things, with the belief therein, or any practices and observations therefrom, without the life, can no more profit now than the Jews literal knowledge of the law could profit them when they were rejected therewith. And since the apostasy, of this latter age especially, I have clearly seen in the Spirit of the Lord, that the professors' knowledge of the letter of the gospel, and cleaving to their apprehensions which they gather therefrom, is become a snare and trap to them, to keep them from feeling the power, and living in the sensibility of the virtue of the grace; even as the Jews' table (or gathered knowledge from Moses and the prophets) became their snare and trap. The Lord open their eyes in his due time to discern it, that they may not withstand that ministration and revelation of his everlasting gospel, which God seeth good to visit the apostatized world with, after this long dark night of apostasy! whereof those that stick in forms, or knowledge of things in the letter, without the power, cannot but prove the greatest enemies, opposers, and persecutors.—1662. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 289.

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TO ALL SUCH AS COMPLAIN THAT THEY WANT POWER, *not applying themselves to yield Subjection to what of God is made manifest in them, upon a Pretence of waiting for Power so to do.*

THE Lord God of eternal power, who made man in his own image, he stretcheth forth his arm to save and redeem his lost creature; it is his power alone that effecteth the work of redemption; he quickeneth man, who is dead in trespasses and sins; he keepeth alive, and leadeth on the quickened soul in the path of life; he conquereth, scattereth, and subdueth all the enemies round about the soul, even all the lusts, corruptions, and temptations, which lead unto and entangle in perdition.

Yet the Lord God requireth somewhat of the man whom he saveth, without which being found in man, and returned to him from man, he saveth him not.

*Quest.* What doth he require of man?

*Ans.* He requireth of man, *repentance, faith, and obedience.* That he should turn at his call from the darkness to the light; that he should trust in, and cleave to the light, but believe the spirit of darkness no more; and lastly, that he should obey the light, follow the light, walk in the footsteps of the living towards the land of light; work the works of God in the light.

*Q.* How can man do this?

*A.* Of himself he cannot; but being touched, being quickened by the eternal power, being turned by a secret virtue and stirring of the life in his heart, then he can turn towards that which turneth



him. Being drawn by the life, by the power; he can follow after the life, and after the power. Finding the sweetness of the living vine, and his soul made alive by the sap of the vine, his heart can now cleave to and abide in the vine, and bring forth the fruit of the living faith and obedience to the husbandman, who daily dresseth the heart, that waiteth in the living principle for further life from the fountain, that it may bring forth the fruits of life more and more.

Now mark: Is it possible for any man to come to the eternal rest that travels not in the path? Or is there any path, but the repentance, faith, and obedience of the living spirit; even of the child begotten by the eternal power, who is taught by the Father to abide and walk in the life and in the power?

God putteth forth his hand all the day long to fetch home lost man. He hath given him a talent, a living talent, which is able to work man into life, and to bring forth the fruits of life in man. Man overlooks the talent, joins not his heart to it, brings not forth the fruits of life to the giver, but cries, *he wants power; and what is he? what can he do? can he cleanse his own heart? can he kill his corruptions? can he quicken himself? &c.*

Now mark again. There are several dispensations of God to mankind; in all which, man of himself falls short of the life, of the power, of the glory, and comes under condemnation. God lays the blame on man, for not hearkening, for not believing, for not walking with him. Man lays the blame on God, and says he wants power. Look on him who is not obedient to the light, which he cannot but confess to shine in his heart, and often to

reprove him ; ask him why he doth not obey it ? Is not this his plea ; *that he wants power* ? Now let men consider, will this stand before the throne of God ? This is the condemnation, that men do not believe the light of life, do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, do not trust and follow the light which would lead them to life, but trust and follow the darkness, which leads into death, and into everlasting condemnation. Their plea is, *they want power so to do*. Is this true ?

I confess the power doth not so flow forth to man as man expects it ; but the power of life works man out of death in a mystery, and begins in him as weakness. There is all the strength, all the power of the enemy, against the work of God in the heart. There is but a little thing, (like a grain of mustard-seed,) a weak thing, a foolish thing, even that which is not (to man's eye) to overcome all this ; and yet in this is the power. And here is the great deceit of man ; he looks for a great manifest power in or upon him to begin with, and doth not see how the power is in the little weak stirrings of life in the heart, in the rising up of somewhat against the mighty strength of corruption in him ; which he returning towards, cleaving to, and waiting upon the Lord in, the strength of the Lord will be made manifest in its season, and he will be drawn nearer and nearer to the Lord, and his enemies be overcome and fall he knows not how. But he that waits for such a mighty appearance of power at first, looking so to begin, and after that manner to be preserved and carried on, can never in this capacity so much as walk in the path eternal ; nor is not in the way of receiving the power, which springs up as weakness, and leads on and over-

comes enemies in a mysterious way of working, and not in such a manifest and direct way of conquest as man's wisdom expects.

The seed of the kingdom is sown man knows not how, even by a sound of the eternal Spirit, which he is not a fit judge of; and it grows up he knows not how; and the power appears and works in it in a way that he is not aware of. He looks for the kingdom, the power, and the life, in a way of his observation, answerable to the thoughts and expectations of his heart. But thus it never comes; but in the way of its own eternal motion, it springs in the hearts of many, and they overlook the thing, and turn from it daily, not knowing its proper way of appearance, but expecting it some other way. And thus the enemy holds them in the bands of death, and they are captives in the strange land, refusing the Prince of Life, in his daily offers of life, because they look not for him thus, but after another way and manner. And till this eye of observation be put out in them, they can never clearly see the appearance of the Saviour to them, nor feel the efficacy of his saving of them from that, from which none but he can deliver.

Now, for the sakes of such as are single-hearted, and yet withheld from the enjoyment of the life of God and of his pure power, through a way of wrong expecting it; I shall say a little concerning the operation of the power in quickening and leading on the quickened soul, as also concerning the way of its springing up in the heart, and the necessity of this way. I myself was long withheld from obedience to the light eternal, in its low appearance of discovering and convincing of sin, through this very deceit, believing that my condition required

the manifest appearance of a very great power to help me; and so when sin overcame me, I did only mourn over it, crying after and waiting for power, but was kept from joining with, and cleaving to that, wherein the power springs up and manifests itself according to its own pleasure, quite contrary to the way of man's expectation.

*The operations of the power* are divers and gradual, according to the condition and necessity of the soul whom it visits, and reacheth forth its hand unto.

1. There is a discovery of the darkness, and of the erring of the heart from God. This is power; for this should never be in any heart, could all the powers of darkness there withstand it.

2. There is a rising of the heart against the evil, with a desire of deliverance from it, and of the springing up of the good in such power as might conquer it. This is a further appearance of power than the former, and a good beginning towards believing or joining with the redeeming arm, which all the powers of darkness (with all manner of subtlety) endeavour to divert the heart from.

3. There is an upright frame of spirit begotten, and a truth of heart formed towards the Lord; from which desires, and cries, and groans after his life and presence, and for deliverance from the enemy, and from under the power of his deceit, spring more and more.

4. There is a fear begotten in the heart of being deceived by the enemy, of being drawn from the feeling of, and panting after, the life and power of God.

5. There is an hope and trust in the Lord's goodness and mercy, with a daily waiting for his ap-

pearance, for the manifestation of his Spirit and pure presence, and for the springings up of his fresh life and precious virtue.

6. There are overturnings of the enemy, battering down his strong-holds, breaking of many snares, beating back of many furious assaults, and causing the plant of life to grow up and triumph over all the powers of darkness.

7. There are secret stayings and upholdings of the heart in the hour of darkness, when God sees necessary to let forth the power thereof upon the soul, and to eclipse his own power. When the enemy buffets, tempts, prevails, and gets ground upon the soul, is drawing it back under the veil, even into the pit, and nothing appears near to stop it or rescue the soul from death, and from the power of the grave, but the sting thereof enters and deeply wounds the soul; yet even then the power is near, secretly upholding, preserving, and watching over the soul; and waiting for the proper season of deliverance. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand," said David, when his feet had almost slipped into the grievous snare of desperate unbelief, and murmuring against God's dealings with him and the rest of his people.

Many more operations of the power might be mentioned, even of its tabernacling and glorious appearing in some vessels in various ways, both delighting itself in the heart, and also filling the heart with delight and joy in the pure life; but these things are better enjoyed and sweetly felt, in the silence of the fleshly part, than spoken of to that ear which is not fit to hear the sound thereof.

Secondly, *The way of the power's springing up in the heart* ; which is,

1. In its turning from the darkness, in the faith, and in the pure obedience which flows from the faith. For, as the soul turns from the power of darkness and death, towards the power of the eternal Spirit of Light ; so the power meets it, embraces it, appears to it, and manifests itself in it, proportionable to its present capacity and condition. And as the soul, being touched with the living virtue, gives itself up to believe, and to trust the power which draws ; so the power manifests itself in the heart, according to the proportion of the faith which the eternal virtue hath begotten there. And as the soul in the faith gives itself up to obey, so the power appears and works the obedience. For we can do nothing of ourselves ; but being called, being drawn, being required to do that which is far beyond our strength, and giving up thereto ; the life springs, the power appears, which does the work. This the Philippians had experience of, to whom the apostle gave that exhortation ; “ Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” It is the unbeliever hangs back, and cries, *Where shall I have power ?* But the faith follows the moving and drawing of the Spirit, and the power never fails the faith. But that which cries, *How shall I get out of Egypt ? Which way shall I ever be able to pass through this intricate wilderness ? How shall I overcome those mighty enemies, which already have the possession of the land I shall inherit, and are strongly fenced in it, and mighty in strength to keep their hold thereof ?* This is not the right seed, this

is not the true Israel, for whom the everlasting inheritance of the life and of the pure power is prepared.

2. Under the cross, under the yoke to the corrupt, (yea, and to the very natural) the power springs. The false birth would have the power spring in a way pleasing to itself; at the time its wisdom sees necessary, and in the way its will would have it; but the power springs up according to its own wisdom, at its own time, and after its own way. When the man would have it, then it flies from him; and when it is not expected, nor perhaps desired, (at least in that way wherein it chooses to appear) then it springs up and puts forth itself. Most men that have felt any thing of God, cannot but desire his life and power; but most fly the cross, wherein it hath chosen to appear; and so they can never meet with it, but are still complaining for the want of it. In the power is the ease, the rest of the gospel. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, saith Christ, and ye shall find the rest which flows from the power.* This made Paul rejoice in the cross of Christ, whereby the fleshly lusts were brought down in him; and the life and eternal power sprang in the seed of the kingdom; for under the cross the seed grows up and flourishes, and the flesh withers and dies. And as the power of flesh and death wastes, so the power of Spirit and life increases.

3. The power springs under the fear, and in the uprightness and love which God hath begotten. I put these together, for there is a close unity between them. The fear is the dwelling of the upright heart, and the love is within the fear. He that distrusts himself, feels his own nothingness,

finds no power to do any thing God requireth, and yet also fears to stay behind the light of God's Spirit in any thing it requires, and so finds a putting on forwards in the faith; in him the power delights to appear. He that would feel strength before-hand, and act in the sense of that strength, from him the power withdraws; but he that is weak, and hath no strength, but still as it freely drops into him from moment to moment, this is the vessel the power chooseth to manifest itself to, and to be continually appearing in. This is the new covenant, "I will put my fear in their hearts." And where the fear of the new covenant is found, so much life, power, and eternal virtue, as is necessary for the present state of that heart, cannot be far off. So in the *upright-hearted*, in the heart that is true to God, the power of deceit cannot dwell, but the power of truth delights to fill it in a way suitable to the state of the spirit, and so as may be seen by the eye of the spirit, and felt by the spiritual sense. And in the love is the constraining power, which constrains from the evil path, from the path of unbelief and disobedience into the path of life.

Thirdly, *The necessity of this way of the springing up of the power*, and not in such a manifest way as man's heart desires, and as man's eye expects.

It is necessary in several respects. *In respect of God, in reference to the creature, and in reference to the soul's enemies.*

1. *In respect of God.* It is necessary that his power and life should spring up in the creature in its own way, according to the counsel of his own wisdom, suitable to his own nature, and not in the



way which the creature chalks out and expects it in. God must be like himself, and walk in his own path in every thing he does. He is a God that hideth himself in the mystery of his working, throughout the whole track of man's redemption; and man must be wrought out of himself, out of his own thoughts, expectations, gathered apprehensions concerning the kingdom and way to life, and led in a path he doth not know, (nor ever can know any longer than he is in it) and in ways he hath not been acquainted with. The way of life is still new, every moment fresh and living; and the earthly part of those who may have in some measure felt the power of regeneration, cannot know it, nor walk in it. Consider this, O ye that fence yourselves against the present appearance of the Spirit; and against the convictions, demonstrations, and drawings of its eternal light and power, by somewhat which ye have formerly felt and known.

2. *In reference to the creature*, the power of God must needs appear thus hiddenly, and in such a mysterious way.

1. That the creature might go through all those exercises of spirit, which are necessary to fit it for its inheritance in the holy land. There are *straits, wants, trials, temptations, inward weaknesses, buffetings from the enemy, withdrawals of the life, &c.* God seeth necessary to exercise the spirits of his with, that he might fit them for himself, and for a safe enjoyment of his life in fulness; which could not be, if there were such a manifest power to begin with, and continually at hand, to perform all in and for the soul, as many men wait for and think necessary to have.

2. That the fleshly part might be thoroughly worn out and destroyed. When the power appears and works mightily in the soul, there is somewhat apt to get up, to exalt himself by the power, and to abuse the power; and if the power were not withdrawn, and this tormented and famished in the absence of the power, and in the withdrawing of the sweet appearance of life, a wrong thing would be stealing into the inheritance, and the soul would never be thoroughly purified, nor come to a pure enjoyment of the power. Therefore doth the Lord appear in this mysterious way, *that the promise might be sure to the seed*; that the seed which is the right heir of the power, might come alone to inherit the power, and the false birth not touch the least enjoyment of it, but feel the bitter strokes of death and destruction from it. What had become of Paul, if he had had power to resist the buffetings of the enemy, as he desired? Would not his fleshly part have remained in the exaltation, and not have been brought down? 2 Cor. xii. 7.

3. *In reference to the enemy.* The enemy could never be wholly conquered, his strong holds in the heart broken down, and the redemption from under his hand perfected, were it not for this mysterious way of the appearing and working of the power, even out of the sight of man's eye, and contrary to his will and expectation. For had man such a power as he desires still present with him; had he faith in his power, or obedience in his power, or could he take up the cross in his power, or have strength to fight against the enemy as he desires and expects, the enemy would still find entrance into him, and keep his hold of him. But God, who knoweth the state of the creature, with the

strength and passages of the enemy into man, by working with his mighty power in man according to his own will, and in the way of his own wisdom, (contrary to what man can desire or expect, but as he is taken into, and comprehended in the eternal will) carries on his work sweetly, and safely, and perfects the salvation of those who will not, who run not, who desire not to be any thing, but wait to feel and know his power, and to become subject to it, and lie under, even in the lowest way of its manifestation and appearance.

**Object.** This may be true in the ordinary way of redemption of souls ; but there are deep captivities, (even the captivity of Babylon inwardly, spiritually) which surely will need a very great appearance of the power of God to deliver out of ; and what can that soul do, but wait there under the captivity until the mighty power arise ?

*Ans.* It is true ; the power must needs be very great, and the appearance of it wonderful, which delivers out of such captivity ; but yet the beginnings of it may be small, and out of the sight of that eye which looks and waits for so great an appearance. Hast thou not light enough already to begin thy travel out of Babylon ? Hast thou begun thy travel ? Dost thou walk in the light which shineth upon thee in that dark land, to gather and lead thee of it ? Or wilt thou not begin to come out, till the very glory and brightness of Zion shine upon thee ? If there be but light and power enough to lead thee one step out of the land of darkness and confusion of spirit, towards obedience to the lowest or meanest truth, that is sufficient for thee at present ; and as thou art found faithful here, more will spring in thee ; but if thou

stop here, (or at any time after thou hast begun and made some progress, because of any thing which falleth out contrary to thy expectation) then that which should lead thee on and strengthen thee stops also; and thou meetest not with that which is found and enjoyed by others in the way, because thou passest not on in it, but balkest thy proper path, judging somewhat more necessary towards thy beginning or progress than the Lord judgeth, or yet seeth fit to impart to thee.

Thus the enemy betrays thee, and holds thee in his chains, which might be loosed and cast off by little and little, didst thou singly give up to the little appearance of that light and power which is able to unbind them, and not expect more at first (or afterwards) than the Lord hath allotted for thy present condition. And let me tell thee this from certain knowledge and experience; that thou, who hast been high, and hast tasted much of God, but hast abused it, and fed the wrong part with it, both in thyself and others; thou must be brought lower than the rest, and for a long season be kept lower; that the pure seed, which hath deeply been buried in thee, may overgrow and sink all thy knowledge, experiences, and observations, concerning the eternal life, and its way of appearance, which formerly thou hadst some true taste of, but now holdest out of the life.

Thou must come down, thou must become nothing by degrees, thou must lie at the foot of the reprovings of that light which thou thinkest thou hast gone far beyond, and be glad of a little help now and then in the lowliness and humility of thy heart, which must not choose what appearance and manifestation it will have from God, before it will

begin to follow him, but be glad of ever so little, that the infinite wisdom sees good to give forth by the hand of his mercy.

Whoever have been high, and are still waiting and expecting in the heights of their own wisdom and observations concerning the kingdom, let them take heed of *despising the day of small things*, and know that their proper beginning (yea, the very path of eternal life itself) lies in the lowness, in the humility, even in that nothingness which bows before the least light of the day, and with gladness of heart enters into and walks in it. For this I certainly know; the wise, the observing eye, the vast comprehending heart, which waits for such an extraordinary power, judging it cannot begin following the light, which daily appears to check and reprove, without some great manifest appearance of power; this cannot see the low little path of life, which is proper for it to walk in, and to the end whereof it must travel, if ever it come to sit down in the kingdom, or to inherit the power of the endless life. Precious is the dispensation of this age, great is the power and glory which is arising; but the wise and knowing of this age are shut out of it, as they have been out of the life and truth of the dispensations of God in all ages. Happy is he who is not above that wherewith God visiteth his soul to redeem it.

POSTSCRIPT.

THAT persons, who have not travelled into the land of life want power, that is out of doubt. The state of Israel in its travels, is a state of weaknesses and wants. How can they in the wilderness but want that which is to be possessed in the

Holy Land? But dost thou want power to begin the travel with? Dost thou want what proportion of power the Lord sees necessary for thee in thy present estate? Is there nothing at all discovered to thee which is contrary to God, either in thy heart, or in thy conversation, or in thy worship, which thou dost not so much as strive to give up to the Lord in, waiting upon him for his power and strength to appear in helping thee? The light appears to discover and lead out of the darkness: now in giving up to the light, and not doubting but that which calls and draws out will give strength, and enable to come out, the power is met with unawares. But that which stands gazing and looking out after a power which it expects to meet with before it will so much as begin to follow the light, that cannot but abide in the captivity, and miss of that power which redeemeth from it. Therefore,

Wait to feel the light of life discovering and drawing from the evil; and let it choose what it shall please first to discover and draw from. And though it be little, and very inconsiderable in thine eyes, yet dispute not, but where the light first begins to lead, do thou there begin to follow.

Then in this waiting and subjecting to the manifestations of the light out of the self-will, self-wisdom, self-knowledge, self-judgment, in the lowliness and abasedness of the mind and spirit before the Lord, the begettings of life in the light are felt, and the renewing into his pure image.

Afterwards that which is begotten (and begun to be renewed in the divine image) is by degrees taught more distinctly to know, discern, and walk in the path of life.

And after this, to that which is thus begotten,

and taught the living faith and obedience, (which is wrought by the mighty power of God, though running in a low secret, hidden way, from the eye of the creature) the great power is revealed, and he grows strong in the power *for God*, and against the enemies of his soul; and by this strength and feeling of God's presence, they *fall daily and continually before him*, and then his victory over them goes on with joy.

But he that stops at first may grow wise and conceited, concerning the things of the kingdom after the flesh, and may hope for great things at last; but by the deceit of the subtlety is kept out of the living path, wherein they are to be waited for, reaped, and enjoyed.

Now, for the encouragement of such as are willing to travel on in the weakness, yielding up their members to the present manifestation of the light, and waiting for the further appearance of the power; it is on my heart to add a letter of a dear friend and brother of mine in the truth, who hath been a deep traveller and fellow-sufferer with me formerly, before this help came forth from the throne of God, since the day-spring from on high hath vouchsafed to visit us, and to guide our feet in the way of everlasting peace.—The Letter is as followeth :

“ DEAR FRIEND,

“ MY dear and tender love salutes thee, in that love from whence I had my being, and from whence sprang all my Father's children, who are born from above, heirs of an everlasting inheritance. Oh! how sweet and pleasant are the pastures which my Father causeth all his sheep

to feed in ; there is a variety of plenty in his pastures, milk for babes, and strong meat for them of riper age, and wine to refresh those that are ready to faint, even the wine of the kingdom, that makes glad the heart, when it is ready to faint by reason of the infirmities. Sure I am, none can be so weary, but he takes care of them ; nor none so nigh fainting, but he puts his arm under their heads ; nor none can be so beset with enemies on every side, but he will arise and scatter ; nor none so heavy laden and big with young, but he takes notice of them, and gently leads them ; and will not leave them behind unto the merciless wolf, because they are his own, and his life is the price of their redemption, and his blood of their ransom : and if they be so young that they cannot go, he carries them in his arms ; and when they can feel nothing stirring after him, his bowels yearn after them ; so tender is this good Shepherd after his flock.

“ I can tell, for I was as one that once went astray, and wandered upon the barren mountains ; and when I had wearied myself with wandering, I went into the wilderness, and there I was torn as with briars and pricked as with thorns, sometimes thinking this was the way, and sometimes concluding that was the way, and by and by concluding all was out of the way ; and then bitter mourning came upon me, and weeping for want of the interpreter ; for when I sought to know what was the matter, and where I was, it was too hard for me. Then I thought I would venture on some way where it was most likely to find a lost God, and I would pray with them that prayed, and fast with them that fasted, and mourn with them



that mourned, if by any means I might come to rest; but found it not, until I came to see the candle lighted in my own house, and my heart swept from those thoughts, and imaginations, and willings, and runnings, and to die unto them all, not heeding them, but watching against them, lest I should let my mind go [astray] after them. And here I dwelt for a time as in a desolate land uninhabited, where I sat alone as a sparrow upon the house-top, and was hunted up and down like a partridge upon the mountains, and could rest no where, but some lust or thought or other followed me at the heels, and disquieted me night and day; until I came to know Him in whom was rest, and no occasion of stumbling, in whom the devil hath no part; and he became unto me as a hiding-place from the storms, and from the tempests. Then came my eyes to see my Saviour, and my sorrow fled away, and He became unto me all in all, my wisdom, my righteousness, and my sanctification; in whom I was and am complete, to the praise of the riches of his grace and goodness that endures for ever.

“ Therefore be not discouraged, O thou tossed as with tempests! nor dismayed in thyself; because thou seest such mighty hosts of enemies rising up against thee, and besetting thee on every side; for none was so beset, and tried, and tempted, as the true Seed was, who was a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. But be thou still in thy mind, and let the billows pass over, and wave upon wave; and fret not thyself because of them, neither be cast down, as if it should never be otherwise with thee: sorrow comes at night, but joy in the morning; and the days of thy mourn-

ing shall be over, and the accuser will God cast out for ever. For therefore was I afflicted, and not comforted, and tempted, and tried, for this end, that I might know how to speak a word in due season unto those who are tempted and afflicted as I once was, as it was said unto me in that day, when sorrow lay heavy upon me. Therefore be not disconsolated, neither give heed unto the reasonings and disputings of thy own heart, nor the fears that rise therefrom; but be strong in the faith, believing in the light which lets thee see them, and his grace thou wilt know to be sufficient for thee, and his strength to be made perfect in thy weakness. And so thou rather wilt glory in thy infirmities, that his power may rest upon thee, than in thy earnest desires to be rid of them; for by these things thou wilt come to live in the life of God, and joy in God, and glory in tribulation, when thou hast learned in all conditions to be contented; and through trials and deep exercises is the way to learn this lesson.

“These things in dear love to thee I have written, being somewhat sensible of thy condition, and the many snares thou art daily liable unto; therefore, watch that thou fall not into temptation, and my God and Father keep thee in the arms of eternal love, over all, unto the end, unto his praise. Amen.

“JOHN CROOK.”

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## CONCERNING FAITH.

*Q.* WHAT is faith ?

*A.* It is a belief in the appearances of the Lord to the soul, and a cleaving to, and drinking in of their virtue. There are divers appearances of the Lord, even as a quickening Spirit, quickening and enlivening the soul ; also as a discoverer, reprover, and condemner of sin, and justifier of righteousness ; likewise as a strengthener and comforter of that which wants his strength and comfort ; and as a fountain of perfect love, sweetness, and of all good, &c. Now, however the Lord pleaseth to appear, that which seeth, knoweth, owneth, and falleth in with his appearances, drinking in the virtue thereof, that is faith.

*Q.* By what means is faith wrought ?

*A.* By the Word in the heart ; by the living Word from which the soul came, and which is nigh to the soul. This was the Word of faith, or the Word which wrought faith under the law, Deut. xxx. This was the Word of faith which the apostles preached, and which wrought faith under the gospel, Rom. x. This is the Word which we feel working faith in us now ; yea, and which worketh it in all those in whomsoever it is wrought ; though they may not know what works it : yea, this is the seed of life, from which every spiritual thing springs and grows in the heart.

[*Q.* How doth this Word work in or upon the heart ?

*A.* According to the entrance it gets into the heart, or according as it is rejected or refused. As it gets entrance, it works life there, and works the creature into its life. It brings in its nature, its

righteousness, its holiness, its sweetness, its peace, its love, its joy, its meekness, its patience, &c. as it makes room in the heart, by working out the contrary. But where it is rejected, it works death and condemnation, and increaseth the captivity and misery of the soul; so that it were better never to hear any sound of Christ in the heart, than not to hearken and become subject thereto.]

*Q.* How is faith received?

*A.* In the quickening power. The seed of life shoots forth its light, its life, its nature, its virtue into the heart. The heart being touched with this, is in some measure quickened towards God, and in and from this quickening virtue faith flows into the soul. For in the death of sin, in the dead state, there is nothing but unbelief; faith therefore must needs flow from the quickenings of life.

*Q.* Wherein doth faith stand?

*A.* In that wherein it is received, even in the quickening power. Faith must be continually kept alive by the seed of life, or it cannot live. It springs in the power, it dwells in the power, it acts in the power, and is never found out of it. Man cannot believe when he will; it is a continual gift, depending upon the continual quickenings and nourishment of that life from whence it sprang.

*Q.* But doth not God withdraw? Where is faith then?

*A.* There is the secret presence of the power, when it is not visibly manifest, enabling the soul to keep to, and depend upon, that which is not seen, but trusted in, though unseen, and not sensibly felt: and there is a secret turning from, and resisting of temptations, and a secret overcoming (the heart being kept true and entire to the Lord) while

the enemy seemeth sensibly to prevail and overcome.

*Q.* Why doth the enemy so assault with unbelief, and fight so stiffly against the faith of the soul?

*A.* Because all depends upon it. Stop that, he stops all; overcome that, he overcomes all. If that stand and abide in strength, he gains nothing; but loses by every temptation and seeming victory.

## CONCERNING HOPE.

*Q.* What is hope?

*A.* The expectation of somewhat from the Lord, in the season of his good-will. The expectation of the crown of life at last; the expectation of deliverance from snares and temptations at present; the expectation of receiving his promises of the divine nature, or of any mercy or blessing which he hath given to pray for; this is hope.

*Q.* What is the nature and proper effects of hope?

*A.* It stays the mind, even in the midst of storms and tempests, that they do not overturn, overwhelm, and sink the soul. It keeps up the head above the many waters, and keeps the heart from utterly fainting. It preserves life in the many famines and strait sieges of the enemy. Hope of relief keeps from yielding to the enemy, and preserves from distrusting the Lord. Distrust cannot enter and prevail, where hope abides. Hope adds strength to the soul in its pursuit of all that is good, and in its flying from and eschewing all that is evil, and is the succourer of faith in the needful hour: yea, how often would the faith be given up and foiled, were it not for the hope which relieves it!

## CONCERNING LOVE.

*Q.* What is love?

*A.* What shall I say of it, or how shall I in words express its nature! It is the sweetness of life; it is the sweet, tender, melting nature of God, flowing up through his seed of life into the creature, and of all things making the creature most like unto himself, both in nature and operation. It fulfils the law, it fulfils the gospel; it wraps up all in one, and brings forth all in the oneness. It excludes all evil out of the heart, it perfects all good in the heart. A touch of love doth this in measure; perfect love doth this in fulness. But how can I proceed to speak of it! Oh! that the souls of all that fear and wait on the Lord might feel its nature fully; and then would they not fail of its sweet overcoming operations, both towards one another, and towards enemies. The great healing, the great conquest, the great salvation is reserved for the full manifestation of the love of God. His judgments, his cuttings, his hewings by the word of his mouth, are but to prepare for, but not to do, the great work of raising up the sweet building of his life, which is to be done in love, and in peace, and by the power thereof. And this my soul waits and cries after, even the full springing up of eternal love in my heart, and in the swallowing of me wholly into it, and the bringing of my soul wholly forth in it, that the life of God in its own perfect sweetness may fully run forth through this vessel, and not be at all tintured by the vessel, but perfectly tincture and change the vessel into its own nature; and then shall no fault be found in my soul before the Lord, but the spotless life be fully

enjoyed by me, and become a perfectly pleasant sacrifice to my God.

Oh! how sweet is love! how pleasant is its nature! how takingly doth it behave itself in every condition, upon every occasion, to every person, and about every thing! How tenderly, how readily, doth it help and serve the meanest! How patiently, how meekly, doth it bear all things, either from God or man, how unexpectedly soever they come, or how hard soever they seem! How doth it believe, how doth it hope, how doth it excuse, how doth it cover even that which seemeth not to be excusable, and not fit to be covered! How kind is it even in its interpretations and charges concerning miscarriages! It never overchargeth, it never grates upon the spirit of him whom it reprehends; it never hardens, it never provokes; but carrieth a meltingness and power of conviction with it. This is the nature of God: this, in the vessels capacitated to receive and bring it forth in its glory, the power of enmity is not able to stand against, but falls before, and is overcome by.

## CONCERNING OBEDIENCE.

*Q.* What is obedience?

*A.* It is the subjection of the soul to the law of the Spirit; which subjection floweth from, and is strengthened by love. To wait to know the mind of God, and perform his will in every thing, through the virtue of the principle of life revealed within, this is the obedience of faith. This is the obedience of the seed, conveyed into the creature by the seed, as it is made partaker of the seed. He is the son who naturally doth the will; he is the

faithful witness who testifies concerning the will; yea, and he is the choice servant also.

[If I could obey in all things that God requires of me, yet that would not satisfy me, unless I felt my obedience flow from the birth of his life in me. "My Father doth all in me," saith Christ. This was Christ's comfort. And to feel Christ do all in the soul, is the comfort of every one that truly believes in him.

True obedience, gospel obedience, is natural to the birth which is born of God. It is unnatural to the flesh, to man's wisdom, to deny himself, and take up the cross; but it is natural to the birth which is born of God's Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit;" and it is natural to it to be conversant in, and exercised about, that which is spiritual.

Honouring and pleasing, and answering the will of the Lord, is the proper aim of the truly obedient. Oh! how do they delight to do the will of God! "I have meat," saith Christ, "that ye know not of." To do the will was his meat and drink: and it is meat and drink to all that are of his nature and Spirit. If I should never have any other reward, but the pleasure of obedience; yet I could not but say and testify, that in answering the law of the pure life, in keeping the holy statutes and commandments of God's Spirit, there is great reward. But yet there is a crown also, and a reaping after this life of every thing that is sown to the Spirit: and the crown is weighty and everlastingly glorious.

Gospel obedience is exceeding necessary in and to the gospel state. Mark! *the Lamb is the leader*: and can any be saved by him, but they that follow



him? When Christ calls out of the world, must not the soul come to him, who is the Shepherd? And must not the sheep daily learn to know his voice, and follow him; even till they come to be acquainted with every moving, drawing, and leading of his Spirit; and so come to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes? Mark! what a weight Christ layeth upon doing. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Why then, the disciple cannot come to happiness, but in the doing, in the obeying of the will of Christ, his Lord and Master.]

Mark how every thing in the kingdom, every spiritual thing, refers to Christ and centres in him. His nature, his virtue, his presence, his power makes up all. Indeed, he is all in all to a believer, only variously manifested and opened in the heart by the Spirit. He is the volume of the whole book, every leaf and line whereof speaks of him, and writes out him in some or other of his sweet and beautiful lineaments. So that if I should yet speak further of other things, as of meekness, tenderness, humility, mercy, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, contentedness, &c. (all which I had much rather should be read in his book, even in the living book of the eternal Word, than in my writings) I should but speak further of his nature, brought up, manifested, and displaying itself in and through the creatures, by his turning the wheel of his life in their hearts. But my spirit hasteneth from words, therefore can I but cut short and pass over these openings in me, that neither my own soul nor others may fix or stay upon words concerning the thing, but may sink in spirit into the feeling of the life itself, and may learn what it

is to enjoy it there, and to be comprehended of it, and cease striving to know or comprehend concerning it. And then, I am sure he that hath a taste of this cannot but be willing to sell all the knowledge that can be held in the creaturely vessel, for that knowledge which is living, and is laid up in that treasury, into which the thief and corrupter can by no means steal or break.

Yet somewhat I cannot but further add ;— because my heart believeth that it may prove serviceable to some, in the guidance and mercy of the good Spirit of the Lord.

#### CONCERNING REGENERATION, OR THE NEW-BIRTH, AND TRUE HOLINESS.

*Q.* What is regeneration, or the new-birth ?

*A.* It is an inward change, by the Spirit and power of the living God, into his own nature. It is a being begotten of his Spirit, born of his Spirit ; begotten into, and born of the very nature of his Spirit. “ That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit,” John iii. It is not every change of mind which is the right change ; but only that which God, by the very same power wherewith he raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave, makes in the hearts of those whom he visits ; who are sensible of, receive, and are subject to his inward life, light, and power.

*Q.* What is true holiness ?

*A.* That holy nature, and those holy actions, which arise from the holy root ; all else are but imitations of holiness, not the true holiness. The tree must be made good first, and then the fruit will be good also. There are many likenesses

of the true holiness up and down in several professions ; but there is no real holiness to be found, nor righteousness neither, but in the trees of God's planting, in the branches which are by him ingrafted into the true vine and olive-tree, whose strength of virtue and holiness lies in the sap, which they daily receive from him.

CONCERNING MAKING OUR CALLING AND ELECTION  
SURE.

*Q.* How may a man make his calling and election sure?

*A.* By making the gift of God sure to him ; by making that sure to him wherein his calling and election is. For the choice is of the seed, the holy seed, the inward seed, the seed of God's Spirit, and of the creature as joined to the seed. God would have none to perish ; but would have all come to the knowledge of Christ the truth, who is the seed, in whom the election stands : and his holy advice to men is, whom he begins to call and to lead towards the election, " to make their calling and election sure." So that the way of making the calling and election sure is, to make the gift sure, the seed sure, the leaven sure, the pearl sure, which God will never reject, nor any that are found in true union with it, and in the love and obedience of it. Oh ! therefore, as God visits with power, with his powerful gift, and as thou receivest power, dominion, and authority over sin, (for in this gift is God's dominion and authority revealed,) be faithful to the gift, be faithful to the power, give up to the truth in the inward parts, come into it, dwell in it, that thou mayst feel its

virtue and delivering nature from every enslaving and embondaging thing, and then stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ the Lord (by the life, virtue, and power of his truth) sets thee free. And so here thou wilt read thy calling, and read thy election day by day; and find them sealed, and sure to thee, in that truth, in that gift, in that heavenly light, in that holy seed, which came from God, and is of him, and which he delights to own, and will never reject.

## CONCERNING REPENTANCE.

Q. Which is the true repentance?

A. That which Christ gives, whom God hath exalted to be the Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, Acts, v. 31. It is not in man's power to repent; his heart is hard and impenitent. It is God's power which melteth, tendereth, and changeth the heart. So that there is a great difference between the sense and sorrow of man's nature, and the sense and sorrow which God gives to the heart which he renews and changes. The one is of an earthly, the other of a heavenly nature. The one is like the early dew, or morning cloud, it soon passeth away; the other is written in the new heart, and abideth. So that in it there is a real sorrow and mourning over the corrupt nature, and all the dead works of the flesh, and a turning from them, and meddling no more with them. This is the repentance of the renewed ones, which is the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ unto them, and is a godly sorrow for sin not to be repented of.

## CONCERNING POVERTY OF SPIRIT AND HUMILITY.

*Q.* Which is the right poverty of spirit, and the true humility ?

*A.* That poverty and humility of spirit, which springeth from the same root from which the faith, the love, the peace, the joy, and the other heavenly things arise ; and is of the same nature. There is a voluntary humility, and a voluntary poverty, even of spirit, which man casts himself into, and forms in himself, by his own workings and reasonings. This not the true, but the false image, or counterfeit of the true ; but then there is a poverty which ariseth from God's emptying the creature, from God's stripping the creature ; and an humility which ariseth from a new heart and nature. This is of the right kind, and is lasting, and abides in the midst of the riches and glory of the kingdom. For, as Christ was poor in spirit before his Father, and lowly in heart in the midst of all the fulness which he received from him ; so it is with those who are of the same birth and nature with Christ. They are filled with humility, and clothed with humility, in the midst of all the graces and heavenly riches which God fills them and adorns them with. Keep in the faith, keep in the truth, keep in the light, keep in the power ; it excludes boasting in or after the flesh, and keeps the mind in that humility and poverty of spirit which God hath brought, and daily further and further brings it into ; and so the humility and poverty remains (poor in spirit for ever, humble in spirit for ever, nothing before the Lord for ever,) even as that re-

mains which brought into that frame, and keeps in that frame for ever. And so the Lord of life is only exalted, and the creature kept abased before him, and low for ever; and is nothing but as the Lord pleaseth to fill, and make it to be what it is. So, what I am, I am by God's love, by his grace, by his mercy, by his goodness, by his power, by his wisdom, by his righteousness, by his holiness, which he of his own good pleasure communicateth, and causeth to spring in me, and filleth and clotheth me with, as seemeth good in his sight.

CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION,  
—SOME THINGS WHICH IT HATH PLEASED THE  
LORD IN HIS TENDER MERCY, TO GIVE ME TO  
EXPERIENCE.

That it is the same Christ, the same Spirit, the same life, the same wisdom, the same power, the same goodness, love and mercy, the same water, the same blood, which both justifies and sanctifies.

That justification and sanctification go hand in hand together. There is none justified, but he that is in measure sanctified; and there is none sanctified, but he that is in some measure justified.

That justification and sanctification are both of and through the grace. It is so in the beginning, and it is so all along. "By grace ye are saved," saith the apostle. The whole work of salvation is begun and carried on through grace. It is through that, God visits and reaches to the soul, with his quickening virtue and power. He regenerates also thereby. Through that he justifies; through that he sanctifies, &c. So that as the work goes

on, Grace, grace, is to be cried to him that does the work, from his very laying the foundation, and fastening the soul thereupon, to his very laying on of the top stone.

Though justification and sanctification be of God's grace and mercy in Christ; yet this doth not exclude faith; but they are also through faith and not without it. God doth not justify man in the unbelieving state, in the dead state, in his abiding there; but in the coming out of it, in the repenting and turning from the dead works to the living God, and in believing in him: and so he also sanctifies him.

Faith and obedience are of the same nature and always go together. So that wherever there is faith, there is obedience likewise; and wherever there is obedience there is faith. Obedience flows from faith, and cannot be without it; for the very nature and virtue of faith is in it. And faith is obedience. For this is the command of God, that the soul believe on him (and in his appearances) whom he hath sent to save; and this believing is obedience unto him that commands it. And this faith and this obedience is holy and just in God's sight; and through it (but not without it) the soul is both justified and sanctified.

That the works of faith the works of the new life, are not the works of the law, the works of the old covenant; nor are excluded justification, as the works of the old covenant are. For I have found the Lord, who hath condemned and excluded all my doings, which ever I have been able to do of myself, still justify and accept what his Spirit and holy power hath done in me. They are not of the same nature in themselves; nor are

they so accounted of in the eye of the Lord. For the Lord distinguisheth between root and root: and what springeth from the holy root, he justifieth as holy; and what ariseth from the unholy root, he condemneth as unholy.

That by the law of faith all boasting is excluded, in the whole work both of justification and sanctification. What is the law of faith? Is not this its law, to fetch all from the Son, to do all in the Son? to quit self, and its own ability, and to perform all in the newness of the Spirit, in the ability which is of God, given and continued, in and through his grace and mercy, to the soul in the Lord Jesus Christ; all the veins of life, all the streams of the new covenant run here. Here is no boasting of the creature; here can be no boasting: for all its ability and strength is shut out; and that which is given of God to it, is all and doth all. Yet, every Jew here hath praise of God. His faith is commended, his love is commended, his faithfulness is commended, his zeal for the Lord, his obedience to the Lord, his patience in suffering, is commended, &c. But the praise and honour of all redounds not to his flesh, but to the Spirit and grace of God in him. So that here flesh is laid low, and kept in the dust for ever, and God alone exalted in this day of his pure power in the heart. He that truly believeth, entereth into rest. How into rest? From what doth he rest? Why, from his own works, from the works of the flesh; yea, from the works of the old covenant; from the works that arise from his own ability, from the works wherein he can never be justified with the gospel justification. But doth he cease from the works of faith? Doth he cease from the



labour of love? Doth he cease from obedience to any thing that God requires? Nay; then surely he rather beginneth to work and labour in the vineyard; and his labour is not in vain in the Lord.

[Q. But many men do not know Christ, and how can they obtain justification by him?

A. There is a double knowledge of Christ; outwardly, by a relation concerning him, and inwardly, by feeling the virtue of his nature. Now, thus many know Christ, who know him not outwardly. They may have somewhat sown, touched, and raised by God, of the nature of Christ in them, and in this they may know the Father, and spring of the same nature, and be gathered in heart into it, and so come within the line or compass of the spiritual life, wherein the spiritual blessings and mercies run and flow through Christ, and for his sake. And so here they may see their sins, and be loaded with them, and feel the life and virtue that washeth from them, and that it is in the mere mercy of God, and so be drawn out of self into the nature, life, virtue, and power of Christ, which is conveyed in substance in the inward feeling and new creating of the heart.—The promise is to the seed of the kingdom, and to man in the seed; and there it reacheth him whenever it findeth him; for in all his gatherings into, and being found in that, he is blessed.

Q. Then may a man be justified who never heard outwardly of Christ?

A. If he feel the seed of life, be overcome by its nature, give up to its law, as it is made manifest in his heart, abhor the nature and law of sin and death, and thus in soul cleave unto the Lord, and

follow him as he pleaseth to lead, the Spirit and life of the Lord cannot but herein justify him; and the grace and mercy of the Lord cannot withhold giving him out his pardon for his sins past, (and also pass by his future frailties) although he distinctly know not how to sue out and plead it. The redemption and pardon of sin is through the unlimited grace of God: which is not restrained to the outward knowledge of the creature, but issueth forth according to the capacity that God creates any where to receive it. Life, mercy, grace, pardon, &c. issue forth from God into the vessels of every kind, under every dispensation that he prepareth for them: and the inward sense of life is the thing that God aims at in all his dispensations, and not the outward skill or knowledge, but thrusts that by in every dispensation, except as his inward life and virtue is found in it.]

#### CONCERNING THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

This I have experienced concerning the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; that it is an inward and spiritual thing, producing inward and spiritual effects in the mind; and that this is it, even that which slays the enmity in the mind, and crucifies to the world, and the affections thereof. "God forbid," said the apostle, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Now mark; that which is contrary to the world, and crucifies to the world, that is the cross. The cross hath this power, and nothing else; and so there is nothing else to glory in. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the

Spirit against the flesh ; and these are contrary one to the other." Mind, here is the cross : the Spirit which is contrary to the flesh, which mortifies the flesh, through the obedience whereof the flesh is crucified. " If ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Whatsoever is of and in the Spirit, is contrary to the flesh. The light of the Spirit is contrary to the darkness of the flesh. The holiness of the Spirit is contrary to the unholiness of the corrupt heart. The life of the Spirit is contrary to the life (or rather death) that is in sin. The power of the Spirit is contrary to the power that is in Satan and his kingdom. The wisdom of God is contrary, and a foolish thing, to the wisdom of man. Yea, the new creature, which springs from God's Holy Spirit, is contrary and death to the old. Now, he that comes hither, out of his own wisdom, out of his own will, out of his own thoughts, out of his own reasonings ; and comes to a discerning of God's Spirit, and to the feeling of his begetting of life in his heart, and his stirrings and movings in the life which he hath begotten ; and waits here, and receives counsel here ; he is taught to deny himself, and to join to and take up that, by which Christ daily crosseth and subdueth in him that which is contrary to God.

And here is the fight of faith, and the good travel under the cross, whereby the holy journey is gone, and the enemies, which rise up to oppose in the way, vanquished and overcome. For here is the power revealed ; the preserving power, the leading power, the conquering power of him who rideth on conquering and to conquer his spiritual enemies in the hearts of his children who know

his voice, and are subject to him ; who daily deny themselves, and taking up his cross, follow him. Woe is to them that are at ease in Zion, under any thing that is contrary to God ; but blessings are upon them whose dwelling is under the cross, and who know no ease but what it allows. It will make truth, life, holiness, righteousness, faith, obedience, meekness, patience, love, separation from sin, communion with the Lord, and all the fruits of the Spirit, as natural to them in the renewed state, as ever sin was in the corrupt state. And in that state they shall be able to say with Paul ; who once complained of his captivity, and that he did what he hated ; yet after he had known the power of the cross, and was crucified with Christ, he could then do nothing against the truth, but for the truth ; yea, then, being a conqueror, having overcome the enemies which stood in his way, he could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. The cause of so many complaints and bowings down of the head, and going mourning because of the prevailings of the enemy, through temptations, sin, and corruption, is because the cross of Christ, which is the power of God, (which is his ordinance against the strength of the enemy) is either not known, or not taken up. And this is the reason that many that make a fair show for awhile, yet afterwards come to nothing (but are like untimely figs, or like corn upon the housetops, which hastily springeth up, but soon withereth) because they either never rightly learn, or keep not to the cross. For that alone hath power from God to bring down and keep down that which is contrary to him. So that from under the cross of Christ, there is no witnessing salva-

tion or preservation from the Lord; but out of the limits of the cross, the enemy hath power to recover and bring back under his dominion again. And whosoever in his travels leaves the cross behind him, does draw back unto perdition, and not travel on, in the living faith, and newness of obedience, towards the salvation of the soul.

CONCERNING THE MYSTERY OF LIFE, AND THE MYSTERY OF THE FELLOWSHIP WHICH IS THEREIN.

God is hid from man, as he lies in his sinful and fallen state; and no man can find or know him, but as he pleaseth to reveal himself by his own blessed Spirit. And Christ, being God's image, there is no knowing or confessing him, or right calling him Lord, but in and by the same Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 3. When he appeared in the days of his flesh, flesh and blood could not reveal him, but only the Father. And he is the same to-day as he was yesterday. He is not to be known now, but in the same Spirit; in his own grace and truth, in a measure of his own life. The dead cannot know him; they only know him who are his sheep, who are quickened and made alive by him. And this life is a mystery: none can understand it, but they that partake of it. Can a man that is naturally dead, know what the life of nature means? No more can a man that is spiritually dead, know what the life of the Spirit means. The natural man may get the words that came from life, and cry up them, and speak great words of the fame of wisdom, and of her children; but the thing itself is hid from them all. Oh; it is a strait gate at which the birth enters, at which none else can

enter. The wise and prudent knowers and searchers after the flesh (and of the Scriptures, as they can put meanings upon them and comprehend them) are shut out in every age; but there is a babe born of naked truth (born of the pure simplicity) admitted by God, while men disdain and despise it.

And the fellowship of the saints is in the life, and in the light, which is this mystery. The fellowship is not outward, but inward. All they that meet together in the outward place, are not in the fellowship, or worship; but only they that meet together in the inward life and Spirit. "They that worship the Father, must worship him in Spirit and truth." Look, there is the worship, there are the worshippers; they that are in the Spirit, in the truth; they that meet in the Spirit, in the truth, they meet together in the one spiritual place, as I may call it. And so we own no man after the flesh, no man according to the appearance; but in the righteous judgment of the Spirit, those only who are of the Spirit. Indeed, we are tender, where there is the least beginning of the work of God in any heart; yea, where there is but so much as a conviction of the understanding; but men are not presently of us, who own our principle in words or outward appearance, but only such as are inwardly changed thereby in the heart. It is true, persons may walk among us, and afterwards go out from us, who were never of us, (as it was in the apostles' days) that were never in the fellowship of life with us, whom we could never own in the sight of the Lord, as being born of him; though we were willing to wait and watch for their good, that they might come to witness the true birth.

Now, from such come the offences, even from the falling off of such as never were truly ingrafted, and also from the slips of such who are not watchful to that which preserves. And woe is to the world, because of the offences which cannot but come. For they which are to be approved in the sight of the Lord, must not somewhat or other happen to make them manifest? And when they are made manifest, the world's eye is offended, and is apt to think hardly of, and reproach the truth itself, because of them. Blessed is the eye which sees into the mystery, into the life itself, where there is no offence. Truth is one and the same for ever.—*The preceding Extracts are taken from "Some of the Mysteries,"* &c. 1663; also from "*Naked Truth,*" &c. 1674. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 403, &c. and vol. iii. p. 325, &c.

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#### SOME QUERIES CONCERNING THE ORDER AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

*Query 1.* WHETHER Christ, who is the Head, Lord, King, &c. hath not appointed a spiritual order and government to be in his church and congregation?

*Query 2.* Whether a spiritual order and government is not useful, profitable, and necessary, for the well-being and right-managing of this spiritual body and holy society in the faith and life of our Lord Jesus Christ? In natural societies, natural government and order is profitable and necessary; and is not spiritual government as profitable and necessary in spiritual societies?

*Query 3.* Did not Christ give power of govern-

ment to his apostles and ministers, at the first publication of his everlasting gospel? All power was given him in heaven and in earth; and did not He, who had all power given him, give power to his apostles and ministers to preach his everlasting gospel to the world, to gather his sheep out of the world, and to watch over them, oversee them, reprove, exhort, admonish, build up in the holy faith, and cut off and cast out that which was unholy, and would dispute against, but not submit unto, the Spirit, life, and power of truth?

*Query 4.* Did not Christ give them gifts also answerable; spirits of discerning, that they might be eyes to the body; and quick ears, that they might hear for the body? For though the Lord hath given every one an eye and an ear, as to themselves; yet every one is not made by the Lord an eye or ear unto the body; but this is appointed for, and given to those to whom the Lord pleases, who hath ordered all things wisely, carefully, and tenderly for the good of all.

*Query 5.* Were there not titles given them suitable to their offices and services in this kind, as pastors or shepherds after God's heart, according to the promise of the new covenant, overseers or bishops, such as watch for the soul; such as were not only to lay the foundation, but also carry on the building even to perfection, even till they were able to present the gathered and quickened souls a chaste virgin to Christ? and were they not to watch against, testify against, and in the power and authority of the Lord to strike at all that was contrary, and would endeavour to interrupt, overturn, and destroy their work, which was of, in, and from the Lord?



*Query 6.* Whether the body and common members of the churches were not to hearken to these ("He that knoweth God, heareth us," 1 John, iv. 6); to obey them in the Lord, to submit to this ministry, and their work in it, in the Lord; to receive the word of truth and holy exhortations and admonitions, milked out by these to them from the breast of life? And were not they that did hearken and obey commended? And were not the other that were not subjected, but slighted them, and their ministry and authority, testified against as disorderly and unruly?

*Query 7.* Were there not some relics of this order and government all along the apostasy, in the true church and ministry thereof? For there hath been a church and a ministry all along the apostasy, blessed be the name of the Lord; though not so visible and outwardly glorious, as many (who have erred from the Spirit and way of truth, and are out of the holy understanding) would make it. It is true, the church hath been as in a wilderness, desolate, as a woman forsaken, as a widow, bereft of her husband, stripped of her children, her visage marred, her witnesses mourning, nothing of her beauty, former estate, or glory, to be discerned or found out; yet all hath been preserved in the root, and there have been some shootings and sproutings of it forth, which have been inwardly felt by that which is of God in the heart, though not outwardly seen by man's eye. Thus the witnesses have had a ministry, have had the testimony of Jesus, even the Spirit of prophesy, all this dark night of apostasy, and in it have spoken mourningly to the world, and to the captivated souls, which that which was of God in his

hath hearkened to ; and there hath been a bowing and subjection of spirit in the Lord. O read this, and praise the name of the Lord, for his mercy to his in former generations, ye who are now gathered into his pure light and living power, from whom the night is past, and on whom the day, the everlasting day-spring from on high, is risen!

*Query 8.* After the apostasy, doth not God renew his commission, and send forth his angel (for they are all but one) to preach his everlasting gospel ? And doth not he give them power to preach to the world, and to gather those that hear the everlasting voice through them, into holy assemblies, separated in spirit, nature, and appearance from the world ? And have they not authority and gifts, as well to build up as to plant ? And ought not those that are gathered by them, as well to be subject to the light, Spirit, power, and authority of the Lord in them, as the former to the former ministers of the Lord ? Oh ! that the world knew them ; oh ! that the world knew the appearance of God in them ! Surely, then, they would bow to the word of truth, and the glorious appearance thereof ; and happiness both inward and outward would break forth upon the earth. There would be no misery, sorrow, nor distress in nations, if the dispensations of life from God had but their course in the earth ; yea, nations and persons, that are now deadly sick, would soon be healed, did they but eat of the leaves of the tree of life, which are appointed by God for their healing, and can easily heal those wounds, and repair those breaches, which the wisdom or counsels of man cannot heal or repair. And oh ! that they that are gathered might keep and be preserved in that sense and subjection, which

they had and received from the Lord in the day of their convincement. Oh! how beautiful, how precious, how glorious was the ministry and ministers of God in their eye then! And to those that are still there, they are still precious; and to those that grow there, they are yet more precious. But those that enter into, or are ensnared in another thing, which leadeth from the true Spirit, lose the sight and sense which they then had, and instead thereof are filled with prejudices and wise reasonings, which to them may seem very strong and undeniable, though truth, and the true spiritual eye, sense, and understanding easily pierces through them, and preserveth those, who abide single in it, to the Lord.

Now, against this holy order and government appointed by God, there may arise in some hearts some such objections as these following:—

*Object.* If any man hath received a gift of ministry, he hath received it of the Lord; and its end being to gather to the Lord, they that by it are gathered, are to be delivered up to the Lord, that he (as King, Priest, and Prophet) may govern, &c.

*Ans.* The end of the ministry is not only to gather, but also to preserve and build up what is gathered, even to perfection. And the soul being (especially at first, if not for a long time) weak and babish, not so fully acquainted with the measure of life, having had but some touches and demonstrations of it, but not being gathered fully into it, nor rooted and settled in it; I say, the soul, in this state, hath as much need of the ministry to preserve, direct, and watch over it in the truth, as to gather it out of the world. Therefore the

Father, in his tender mercy and love, hath appointed those who are grown in his life (and in the power and authority of his Spirit) to oversee, watch over, instruct, and take care of the flock, so as they may give to him an account of their souls; and in their care, diligence, and faithfulness, they are owned and blessed of the Lord; and the other in their holy fear, reverence, and subjection. Now, this is right order from God, wherein the safety of the flock consists; but out of this is danger and confusion, which the measure of life teacheth to avoid.

*Object.* But in a case of doubt or difference, which shall be the judge; the measure of life within, or the testimony of others without? Shall I judge as I feel the thing in the measure of my own life? Or shall I submit to others against my own sense and judgment, because I have an esteem of them, as being much above me in the growth, sense, and understanding of truth?

*Ans.* It is a great matter to judge aright, and to discern and know the measure of truth (the voice, motion, and judgment thereof) from all the enemy's false appearances, and from all the deceits of the heart. This is most certain; Jerusalem, the heavenly building, the church of the first-born, is at unity with itself. Truth is pure, eternal, unchangeable, always the same; the same in every member, in every vessel, throughout the whole body.

And this I may say concerning its appearance in this our age,—Was ever the like unity known and brought forth since the days of the apostles? How hath the Spirit been one, the demonstration and testimony of truth one, the doctrine one, the conversation and practices one in us all! Why, or

how so? Because we have had our begetting, birth, and teaching from the same life, the same Spirit; the same fountain springing up, and open in us all, that have been gathered into its nature and power. Now, from this fountain, from this spring of life, never issueth any thing that is contrary to the life in any. Therefore, if there appear a contrariety, there must be a waiting to feel who is erred from, or at least not yet fully gathered into the measure of life. And such as are of an inferior stature and growth in the body, are in an especial manner to watch and wait in sobriety and fear, till the Lord clear up, and make things manifest; and likewise in the mean time to take heed of an hasty concluding, according to what riseth up in the understanding or judgment (though with ever so great a seeming clearness and satisfaction) as if it must needs be of and from the life in the vessel.

It is not an easy matter, in all cases, clearly and understandingly to discern the voice of the shepherd, the motions of God's Spirit, and certainly to distinguish the measure of life from all other voices, motions, and appearances whatsoever. Through much growth in the truth, through much waiting on the Lord, through much fear and trembling, through much sobriety and meekness, through much exercise of the spiritual senses, this is at length given and obtained. And yet, there is a preservation in the mean time to that which is lowly and submissive, looking up to the Lord continually, and not trusting to his own understanding, sense, and judgment. But that which is hasty and confident, and so ready to plead for its own sense and judgment, according to the measure of life, as it calls it; that is commonly out, entered

into the erring spirit, pleading and contending for it knows not what, and is very apt to judge and condemn others in that very respect, wherein itself is most justly and righteously judged and condemned by the Lord, even by his pure life and Spirit in his people.

This, then, is in my heart to say in short to this objection: let the measure of life judge freely in thee at any time concerning any thing, and that judgment will stand for ever. But be thou wary, wait on the Lord, that thou mayst be sure thou dost not mistake in thy own particular, calling that life, which the Lord and his people know to be otherwise. For if so, thou departest from the unity and bond of the Spirit, and from the true sense and judgment, and givest deceit an advantage over thee, even to lay a foundation of destroying thee. Likewise those who are to watch over thee in the Lord, (to lay his truth before thee, to exhort and reprove thee, as occasion is,) that they may give an account of thy soul to him, cannot do it with joy and rejoicing in his presence, but with grief and lamentation of heart; which is not at all profitable, but very unprofitable for thee.

Now, for a close: there are some considerations springing up in my heart concerning unity, which I find drawings here to annex, in true love and tenderness, for the use and service of others; which are as follow:

1. Unity in the spiritual body, which is gathered into and knit together in the pure life, is a most natural and comely thing. Yea, it is exceeding lovely, to find all that are of the Lord of one heart, of one mind, of one judgment, in one way of practice and order in all things.

2. The Lord is to be waited upon for the bringing forth of this in the body; that as there is a foundation of it laid in all, (the life and spring being over all,) so all may be brought by him into the true and full oneness.

3. The Lord is to be acknowledged and praised in the bringing of it forth, (so far as it is brought forth,) and to be waited upon for the further perfecting of it.

4. A watch is to be kept (throughout the whole body, and in every heart) for the preserving of it, so far as it is brought forth, that the enemy, by no device or subtlety, cause disunion or difference in any respect, wherein there was once a true unity and oneness. For the enemy will watch to divide; and if he be not watched against, in that which is able to discover and keep him out, by some device or other he will take his advantage to make a rent, in those that are not watchful, from the pure truth and unity of life in the body. For he that in the least thing rends from the body, in any respect or particular which was brought forth by the life, he in that respect hearkens to another spirit, even the dividing spirit, and by its instigation rends from the life itself, and so doth not keep his habitation, nor his unity, with that which abides in its habitation.

Now it is also in my heart, for the perfecting of this close, to mention a few things, in the same love and tenderness, which I have found helpful to me, towards the preserving of me in unity with the body. Perhaps it may please the Lord to refresh some others by the mention of them, and to make them useful and helpful to them also.

1. The first is, *the pure fear of the Lord*. This

poiseth and guardeth the mind, keeping down fleshly confidence and conceitedness, which is very apt to spring up, making it wary and considerate either of what it receives or rejects; of what it practiseth, or forbeareth practising; causing it to wait much, try much, and consult much with the Lord, and with his ministers and people, and preserves out of that suddenness and inconsiderateness of spirit, at which the enemy often enters. For, truth is weighty, and will bear trial; and the more it is tried in the balance, the more manifest its nature and ways appear; but the enemy's appearances and likenesses are not so; but their deceit, by a thorough trial, comes to be made manifest.

2. The second is, *humility of heart*. This is very precious, and of a preserving nature. Yea, in this state, the Lord helpeth and teacheth; and the soul also, in this state, is fit to receive the help and teachings of the Lord. That which is lifted up and conceited, ready to justify its own way, and condemn even the whole body, is neither fit to be taught by the Lord, nor doth the Lord delight, but rather disdain to teach it. And so, not being taught by him, it must needs be liable to err; yea, to hearken to that spirit, whose voice is more pleasing and suitable to the erring mind than the Lord's voice is.

3. A third great help, which in the tender mercy of the Lord I have had experience of, is *sobriety of judgment*. Not to value or set up mine own judgment, or that which I account the judgment of life in me, above the judgment of others, or that which is indeed life in others. For the Lord hath appeared to others, as well as to me: yea, there are others who are in the growth of his truth, and in



the purity and dominion of his life, far beyond me. Now for me to set up or hold forth a sense or judgment of a thing in opposition to them, this is out of the sobriety which is of the truth. Therefore, in such cases, I am to retire, and fear before the Lord, and wait upon him for a clear discerning and sense of his truth, in the unity and demonstration of his Spirit with others, who are of him and see him. And this will prevent the rents which the want of this sobriety may occasion.

4. The last thing which I have now to mention is, *tenderness, meekness, coolness, and stillness of spirit*. I wrap up these together, because they are much of a nature, and go much together. These are of an uniting, preserving nature. He that differs and divides from the body, cannot be thus; and he that is thus, cannot rend or divide. This is the pure heavenly wisdom, which is peaceable and keepeth the peace; but the other wisdom is rough, stiff, hard, clamorous, ready to take offence, ready to give offence; exceeding deep in the justification of itself, exceeding deep in the condemnation of others; and dares in this temper appeal to the Lord, as if it were right in its ways, but wronged by others; as if it did abide in the measure of his truth and life, which others have departed from. And how can it be otherwise? How can the wrong eye, the wrong spirit, the wrong wisdom, but judge wrong, justifying the wrong practices, and condemning the right? But, such shall find, if they come to the true touchstone, even the measure of life indeed, that they are not in the true tenderness, which proceeds from the life, in the true meekness and gentleness, in the true coolness and stillness; but rather in the reasonings, noises, cla-

mours, and disturbances, which arise from another spirit, mind, and nature than that which is of the truth. And in coming back from this wisdom to the *pure wisdom*, from the pretended measure of life to the *true measure*, and becoming tender, meek, cool, and still in it, they shall there feel their error from the Spirit and power of the Lord, and therein own their condemnation therefore from him; and also justify them who have abode in the power, and been guided by the Spirit and pure measure of life, which is from God and in God, while they have departed from it. For, though the spirit of error, wherewith they have been deceived and entangled, hath made them believe that they have faithfully abode in the principle and doctrine of truth, while others have departed; yet, that will soon vanish, as truth comes again to be felt, and heard speak in them, and the measure of life to live again in them, and to redeem them afresh into its holy nature and pure living sense. And blessed is he who is not deceived about truth; but is of the *pure nature*, and in the *pure power* of it; in whom the *true eye* sees, the *true ear* hears, the *true heart* understands; who is of a *right spirit*, and walketh *uprightly* before the Lord and among his people. The blessing of the seed, the peace, comfort, and joy which is from the Most High, shall descend upon him, fill his vessel, and continue with him, to the satisfying of his heart and the overflowing of his cup, in the midst of his brethren, and in the very sight of his enemies. *The Lord God, of his tender mercy, who is the great Shepherd of the sheep, watch over, preserve, and mightily defend all his from all devouring spirits, and inward devices and deceits of the enemy; carrying on and*

*perfecting the work of his goodness, love, and mercy in them, to his own glorious, eternal, everlasting praise.*  
Amen. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 439.

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### SOME DEEP CONSIDERATIONS ON THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

MANY deep considerations have been upon my heart concerning the state of Israel, both past, present, and to come; some of which I find drawings to communicate; together with some QUESTIONS and ANSWERS concerning UNITY.

The considerations concerning Israel are these which follow :

1. The precious living state which my soul remembereth to have been about the beginning of the late troubles of this nation, when Israel was bent to seek after the Lord, and applied their hearts to wait upon him in fastings, and earnest supplications, wherein my heart hath often had the testimony that they were accepted of him, and had many times the seal of his presence and power among them : yea, my heart did truly unite with and enjoy the Lord in what was then given forth, and I can never be drawn to deny the truth and worth of that dispensation ; though I know it was swallowed up by a greater desolation soon following after, and since by the breaking forth of a more lively dispensation.

2. The overrunning of that state by the subtlety of the enemy, drawing the minds of the simple and upright-hearted from the living feeling, and

from the inward power of religion, into the disputations and contentions about forms of worship and church-government, which drew out the reasoning part, and withdrew the spirit of the mind from feeding on its proper nourishment; and so, life decayed in the spirit, while wisdom, and knowledge, and subtlety increased in the understanding. And so, the upright-hearted, missing of life where before they had found it, were scattered up and down to seek after it; and those who abode where they were, grew dry, barren, and contentious; losing the savour, sweetness, meekness, love, and indeed whatever was living and precious, and remained fixing their minds on that which the Lord had departed from. O the darkness and misery of this state! O the pain of the hearts where life was stirring, for want of the living God! O the death and formality of those that were dead and formal! Surely, had not the Lord pitied his people in this state, and appeared to them in his life and power, (which this great desolation made way for,) it had been determined concerning Israel for ever: for death had overgrown the generality, and life was even gasping and expiring in the single-hearted.

3. The precious breaking forth of the Lord, at this dismal time, in this hour of distress and desperate condition of Israel, in some hidden vessels, whom he had kept waiting upon him, and whom he had preserved fresh in the sense of him; to whom his appearance was very glorious, to whom he opened the state of the earth, and the state of his people, giving them the everlasting gospel to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, and promising them that his Spirit and power should

go along with them, bidding them go forth to till and dress the earth, and to gather his people into his fold. And who can utter what the glory of this light was, in its shining and breaking forth in their hearts? How welcome to their weary souls, how pleasant to the eye of their spirits, how demonstrative and satisfactory to their hearts! O the joy of that day! (surely, it can never be forgotten by them,) wherein they sensibly felt the pouring down of the Spirit of life upon them, and their hearts gathered into the bosom of eternal rest, and their souls and bodies sanctified, and set apart for the Lord and his service.

4. The contemptible means God put into their hands to work this work by; which was not by preaching any new thing, but by directing to a principle which God had already hid in the earth of every man's heart, and which was to be known by its divine nature and light, turning against and reproving sin; testifying that this was the way the Lord of heaven and earth had chosen, to bring his sons and daughters into the power and glory of his life. Oh! what heart can receive this, what eye can see any beauty in this, but that which the Lord toucheth and openeth! I testify, in the sense of life, that the wisdom of man, yea, the wisdom of Israel corrupted, cannot but despise and turn from this. Is not this the lowest of all dispensations? Is not this common to all mankind? Doth not this fall short (in itself, as I may say, and as it hath formerly been dispensed) of the dispensation of the law of Moses to the Jews, much more of the dispensation by Christ and his apostles? Who would have looked for the Lord here! And yet this hath the Lord chosen to gather his

people by, and to appear to the world in; and hath gathered the life, virtue, and substance of all former dispensations into it, as those who are gathered thereby, and have waited upon him therein, and felt the nature and power of his life, (and seen things past, present, and to come,) are living witnesses of, against all the gainsayings, thoughts, and reasonings of flesh and blood.

5. The contemptibleness of the vessels, which the Lord chose to fill with this treasure, and to let forth this dispensation of his life through. They were for the most part, mean as to the outward; young country lads, of no deep understanding or ready expression, but very fit to be despised everywhere by the wisdom of man, and only to be owned in the power of that life wherein they came forth. How ridiculous was their manner of coming forth and appearance to the eye of man! About what poor trivial circumstances, habits, gestures, and things did they seem to lay great weight and make great matters of moment! How far did they seem from being acquainted with the mysteries and depths of religion! But their chief preaching was *repentance, and about a light within, and of turning to that, and proclaiming the great and terrible day of the Lord to be at hand*; wherein, I confess, my heart exceedingly despised them, and cannot wonder that any wise man or sort of professors, did, or do yet despise them. Yea, they themselves were very sensible of their own weakness, and unfitness for that great work and service wherewith the Lord had honoured them, and of their inability to reason with man; and so, in the fear and in the watch of their spirits, kept close to their testimony, and to the movings of his

power, not mattering to answer or satisfy the reasoning part of man, but singly minding the reaching to and raising of that, to which their testimony was.

6. The blessing that God gave to this his dispensation of life in their hands. O how did the Lord prosper them, in gathering his scattered wandering sheep into his fold of rest! How did their words drop down like dew, and refresh the hungry, thirsty souls! How did they reach to the life in those to whom they ministered, raising up that which lay dead in the grave, to give a living testimony to the living voice of God in them! How did they batter the wisdom and reasonings of man, making the loftiness thereof stoop and bow to the weak and foolish babe of the begettings of life! Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what the power of life hath wrought through them, in the hearts and consciences of those, who have longed after and waited for the Lord. Oh! the breathings and meltings of soul, the sense of the living presence of God, the subjecting of the heart unto the Lord, the awakening of and giving strength unto his witness, the falling down and weakening of the powers of darkness, the clear shining of the light of life in the heart, and the sweet running of the pure streams thereof into the enlivened souls, which hath often been known and sealed to, from the powerful appearance of God in their ministry! Indeed, when I have considered these and such like things in my heart, and narrowly marked them in my converse with them, I have been often forced to cry out concerning them, *Truly here is man very weak and con-*

*temptible; but God very glorious and powerful.* And indeed, when at any time I looked on the man, I was hardly able to forbear disdaining them; but, on the other hand, when the eye of my spirit beheld the power and glory of the Lord in them, I could hardly forbear over-esteeming and exalting them.

7. The glory which the Lord advanced these vessels to, since his beginning to make use of them. How hath he enriched them with gifts and abilities, and every way fitted them for the service and employment he hath had for them! How hath he enlarged their ministry, that they who had very little to say, either by way of declaration or disputation at first, now abound with strength, and abundantly surpass the knowledge and wisdom both of the world, and of other professors of religion! The Lord indeed hath adorned them, putting his beauty upon them, and causing them to grow up in his strength and in his wisdom. This mine eye hath seen, and often took notice of, blessing the name of the Lord, and praying to him for their preservation. And surely, whoever he be, that hath either known himself, or heard the relation of the poverty of these young striplings, when they first came forth in the power of the Lord, how empty in themselves they then were, how sensibly they went up and down of their own weakness, how little they had to say to people that came to observe them and inquire of them, how afraid they were to be drawn from their watch, at what a distance they stood from entering into reasoning about things; I say, he that did know and doth consider this, and shall also behold how the Lord hath advanced them since, making them



mighty and honourable with his gifts and abilities, (with the beauty whereof the very man flourisheth, to the sight of every eye that is in any measure truly open,) cannot but acknowledge the change to be wonderful.

8. I have had the sense and consideration of this also in my heart, that their danger is now greater than when they were poorer, weaker, and not so enriched and gifted by the Lord. The enemy is very subtle and watchful, and there is danger to Israel all along, both in the poverty and in the riches; but the greater danger is in the riches: because then, man is apt to forget God, and to lose somewhat of the sense of his dependence which keeps the soul low and safe in the life, and also to suffer somewhat of exaltation to creep upon him, which presently in a degree corrupts and betrays him. *The heart that is in any measure lifted up in itself, so far it is not upright in the Lord.* Let every one feel this, waiting to be preserved, and praying for those who are most beautified by gifts and abilities from the life, because in this respect, and at this time, their danger is greatest. When Israel is poor, low, weak, trembling, seeing no loveliness nor worthiness in himself, but depending upon the mere mercy and tender bowels of the Lord in the free covenant of his love, &c. then is Israel safe. But when he hath a being given him in the life, and is richly adorned with the ornaments of life, and comes to have the power itself in his hand to make use of, then is he in more danger of being somewhat of himself, and of forgetting him that formed him; being apt to make use of his gifts without such an immediate sense of the Giver as he had in his trembling and

weak estate, and so departing out of that humble, tender, abased, contrite state, and temper of spirit, wherein he was still preserved.

9. This also hath been manifest to me, and deeply impressed on my spirit all along, that the Lord may, if he see good, suffer some great and eminent ones to fall in Israel. Man may forget himself, and the Lord may let out temptation upon him, and suffer it to enter, that he may bring him to the sense and feeling of his weakness again. Yea, those who have felt the power of the Lord in and through an instrument, may give more to the instrument than belongs unto it, and so put the Lord upon recovering the honour due to him, which is misplaced and misapplied to that which is but his instrument. This is the Lord's day, (the light thereof is his, the life his, the power his,) and the glory thereof will he not give to another. If therefore any man, in this day, shall take to himself what belongs to the Lord, or any other shall give it him, the Lord will not so lose it, but will find out a way to recover his own. And happy is the man who lieth continually perfectly abased before the Lord, assuming nothing of the Lord's to himself, nor attributing any thing of the Lord's to another, that the Lord alone may be exalted everywhere. And let all gifts serve the seed, and its rising over all gifts be waited for, that the life every where may have its due, being lifted up over all.

10. I have had a deep sense of this also, that if the Lord should suffer such a thing to fall out among us, it may cause a great shaking and scattering in Israel. Surely, I may say, it would come very unexpectedly and unsuspectedly to many;

and so such persons would be surprised with it, and not at all prepared for it. Alas! who could suspect (feeling persons so eminent in the power, and so exercised and skilful in the way and paths of righteousness, and so able to instruct others therein) that they could possibly fall in any degree from the truth and power of life! And yet they are not free from temptation: and if they be confident of their own strength, and forget the tender hand of the Lord, he may suffer a temptation to enter them, which presently begets a ground for evil weeds to spring up in, and for blindness, and hardness, and error from the pure power, to creep in at.

O dear friends! who know the preciousness of life, and desire the preservation of the Lord in your several conditions, let us fear the Lord, and his goodness to us, remembering what a low ebb we were at when the Lord visited us, and how freely he visited, and how freely he daily preserveth, that we may not be hardened or lifted up against the world, or against any sort of professors; but may magnify the grace which hath made and keepeth up the difference between us and them, praying to the Lord for them, and watching for the hour of his mercy to them, exercising all manner of sweetness, and meekness, and long-suffering towards them in the mean time; also pitying and bearing with all the tempted ones among ourselves, as such who are sensible that we also may be tempted, and understand the ground why we fall not by the temptation.

What shall I say more? There are three *Queries* appearing in my view, in relation to this thing, which the hearts of some may desire satis-

faction about ; to which I find somewhat, in way of answer, springing up in me.

*Query* 1. How may a man, whom the Lord hath exalted by gifts and services to him, be preserved from falling ?

*Ans.* 1. There is that which waiteth to preserve, and is still stretching forth its hand, to keep to itself that which it hath gathered ; which being hearkened and yielded unto in its discoveries and warnings, will not fail to deliver the soul from the danger and snares of every condition.

2. There is the free mercy and love of the covenant, wherein the soul may find help and pity, although it should be somewhat tainted and entangled with the snares of the enemy.

3. There is a proper frame or state of spirit (to wit, of humility and brokenness,) which is fit for Israel in every condition ; but more especially when he is exalted in the dominion and power of life, and honoured with great gifts and services for the Lord. In this, Israel is safe : and happy is he who is not suffered to abide in any degree of exaltation of spirit ; but is brought down again (through the tender mercy and love of the Lord) into this, though by the buffetings of Satan. [2 Cor. xii. 7.]

*Q.* 2. How may the little ones, (if the Lord should suffer one or more, of such as have been very eminent in his service, to decline and fall,) how may they be preserved from falling with him or them ?

*A.* Keeping to the measure of life in the particular, and not valuing others by an apprehension concerning them ; but only knowing and honouring them as they are felt and discerned in the life :

this will preserve every particular that is thus ordered, from being tainted with any of their snares or deviations. *O Israel! O little babes! know no man after the flesh; but the Lord alone in his living Spirit.* For man is but a vessel, wherein the life may appear or disappear at pleasure; and the Lord is not engaged to make use of man in his service, further than he seeth good. The Lord may appear where he hath never appeared before, and he may not appear where he hath hitherto appeared very frequently and powerfully. Oh! know the life in thine own heart, that is to be the judge in thee concerning the appearances of life in others. If that judge not, be still and silent in thy heart, waiting for its judgment: when that judgeth, let all thy thoughts and reasonings be bowed down under it. Let man have no more than his due, while the Lord pleaseth to make use of him; and to such, there will accrue no great shaking or damage, when the Lord layeth aside any of his own instruments. But if any thing but the life judge, it will still either be setting up, or throwing down, man: whereby there will come loss on either hand in the issue, to all such who thus act.

Q. 3. How may any such as have fallen from an high and glorious state in the power and dominion of life, be again recovered?

A. Indeed, this is a very difficult thing: not because the mercy and power of the Lord is at a loss to or concerning man in this state; but because this condition sets a man's spirit at so great a distance from the use of that remedy which the Lord hath appointed for man's recovery. It is very hard to bring such an one to a sense of his

loss, (whereby the depth of his fall might be prevented,) until he be gone very far; and the further he goes in his declining from the life, the harder will his recovery be. Again; it is hard for such an one to become so poor, and lie so low and so long at the foot of God's grace, as also to be contented to be laid aside and not made use of, as the Spirit of the Lord may judge necessary for him, to bring him into a perfect abasement of spirit, and to work that perfectly out of him whereby the enemy now entered to betray him: yea, the judgment of the Lord, the righteous and severe judgment of the Lord, is hard to be borne in this state; and it is much if such a vessel do not break here, in its new forming on the wheel. Yet, that which boweth before the Lord, being willing to be smitten and abased by him, and to lie under his correction and judgment his season; even until he say, It is enough, the Lord will without doubt restore into his favour, if not also into the honour of his service again.

*Object.* But some tender heart, which feeleth many weaknesses, much unbelief, and the danger of falling daily, may say, If this be true, what will become of me! If such as these be liable to fall, and to fall so dangerously, how shall I stand? I was wounded enough before, with the sense of my own condition; but this affrighteth me much more.

*A.* O tender heart! the enemy may make use of this to trouble and afflict thee! but it was not so intended by the Lord, who is very full of unutterable bowels, and who hath a day of bowels for thy state; yea, his day, which hath already dawned, is so dawning as to reach thee. The Lord hath not

yet done gathering his scattered sheep, nor yet shown the utmost skill he hath, either to gather or to preserve; and the state of the weakest, under the preserving power of the Lord, is safe. Great are the diseases of Israel; great is yet the loss of scattered souls, which as yet know not the call of the Shepherd; and if at any time they do feel a touch thereof, are easily reasoned again out of it, and driven back by the thoughts of their own hearts. Oh! great, great also is the skill of the Shepherd, and his hand very tender, which the Lord is putting forth for the help of these; blessed be his name! And as the condition of these needs and requires that, from the nature and soul of the Lord, which the conditions of others do not require; so the nature of the Lord hath mercy and love in it to answer their states, and will give it out in his day and season. Oh! let none be offended thereat. Let no eye throughout all Israel be evil, because the Lord is exceeding good. If he please to kill the fatted calf, and set it before his prodigal son, let none that have walked faithfully with him in any dispensation be offended thereat: but rather let all, in whom is life, stand ready to shout at the issuings forth of love and mercy, in the varieties of the dispensations thereof, according to the need and capacity of every sort of vessels prepared by the Lord to receive it. Therefore, *O thou afflicted! tossed with tempests, and not comforted*; thou shalt know and feel this from the Lord, that he knoweth how to bring home his consolations to thy soul, and to cast thee into the mould of his life, and bring thee forth in the power of his righteousness; and that he needeth not to find any worthiness or righteousness in thee; for he can create and make

room for it in thy heart ; yea, he can begin, carry on, and perfect his work in thee, for his own name's sake. And to thee, O broken soul ! I cannot so much say, *Do this, or believe this ; but rather, the Lord will work in thee ; yea, the Lord will quicken faith in thee, and raise up his own nature from the seed of his own life, which he himself hath sown in thy inward parts, and will not fail to preserve.*

Besides, this broken state of thine, wherein the vileness and weakness of self is daily felt, with the exceeding great need of the Lord's preserving power and mercy, is a false state ; towards which, that which alone preserveth, is continually issuing forth in the bowels of his tenderness. And though thou dost not see the love of the Lord, and his tender care over thee, and so wantest the comfort of thine own condition ; yet, it is never a whit the less in the heart and Spirit of the Lord towards thee ; and in divers respects I may say, it is better for thee at present to want the sight of it. I am satisfied in my heart concerning the nature and ways of the Lord, and I know there is that mercy in him which my soul crieth for ; and that it is not only treasured up, but about to be issued forth towards those, for whose sakes the cry is unto him for it. *The Lord will arise, and have mercy upon Zion, even upon the mourners and distressed ones in Zion ; he will say to them who are of a fearful heart, and mourn bitterly because of their unbelief, (finding themselves as unable to believe now for righteousness, as ever the Jews were to work for it,) Be strong ; stand still ; wait on me, your God ; behold, my righteousness is ready to be revealed, and I am bringing that faith with me which ye want, to give your souls the entrance into my promises, and*



*into my divine nature promised. Ye are my lambs, and my bosom is for you, and thither will I gather you ; yea, ye have already conceived, and are with young, though ye know it not ; and I will lead you on gently in a way that ye cannot, nor ever shall know, as ye would know it ; but shall not want or miss of that knowledge thereof, that I see good for you. I will beget a deeper life in you, and bring it forth after a deeper way of dispensation than ye have yet been acquainted with, or than your understandings can comprehend ; but in the death which I am bringing upon you, and in the travailing pangs which ye shall feel in your hearts shall it spring up in you and be brought forth. O dear lambs ! mind the quickenings of life, and the savour and sense which the Lord begets in the heart, and let the outward knowledge (even of what ye have had experience) go, but as the Lord quickens it ; and mind not the noises of thoughts and reasonings about things, which the soul's enemy will be striving to fill you with and batter you by ; but sink down from these, and wait to feel that which lies beneath them ; in the free nature, life, virtue, power, and motions whereof alone is your soul's salvation ; and if ye cannot receive the sense of this direction at present, wait on the Lord either for it, or for what other manifestation or tender help he shall please to give forth unto you.*

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SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, CONCERNING SPIRITUAL UNITY.

*Q. 1. What is spiritual unity ?*

*A.* The meeting of the same spiritual nature in divers, in one and the same spiritual centre or streams of life. When the spirits or souls of creatures are begotten by one power into one life, and meet in heart there; so far as they thus meet, there is true unity among them.

*Q. 2. Wherein doth this unity consist ?*

*A.* In the life, in the nature, in the Spirit wherein they are all begotten, and of which they are formed, and where their meeting is. It consists not in any outward or inward thing of an inferior nature; but only keeps within the limits and bounds of the same nature. The doing the same thing, the thinking the same thing, the speaking the same thing, this doth not unite here in this state, in this nature; but only the doing, or thinking, or speaking of it in the same life. Yea, though the doings, or thoughts, or words be divers; yet if they proceed from the same principle and nature, there is a true unity felt therein, where the life alone is judge.

*Q. 3. How is the unity preserved ?*

*A.* Only by abiding in the life; only by keeping to the power, and in the principle, from whence the unity sprang, and in which it stands. Here is a knitting of natures, and a fellowship in the same spiritual centre. Here the divers and different motions of several members in the body (thus coming from the life and spirit of the body) are known to and owned by the same life, where it is fresh and sensible. It is not keeping up an out-

ward knowledge or belief concerning things, that unites, nor keeping up an outward conformity in actions, &c. for these may be held and done by another part in man, and in another nature; but it is by keeping and acting in that which did at first unite. In this there is neither matter nor room for division; and he that is within these limits, cannot but be found in the oneness.

*Q. 4. How is the unity interrupted?*

*A.* By the interposition of any thing of a different nature or spirit from the life. When any thing of the earthly or sensual part comes between the soul and the life, this interrupts the soul's unity with the life itself; and it also interrupts its unity with the life in others, and the unity of the life in others with it. Any thing of the man's spirit, of the man's wisdom, of the man's will, not bowed down and brought into subjection, and so not coming forth in and under the authority and guidance of life, in this is somewhat of the nature of division: yea, the very knowledge of truth, and holding of it forth by the man's wisdom, and in his will, out of the movings and power of the life, brings a damp upon the life, and interrupts the unity; for the life in others cannot unite with this in spirit, though it may own the words to be true.

*Q. 5. How may unity be recovered, if at any time decaying?*

*A.* In the Lord alone is the recovery of Israel, from any degree of loss in any kind, at any time; who alone can teach to retire into, and to be found in that, wherein the unity is and stands, and into which division cannot enter. This is the way of restoring unity to Israel, upon the sense of any

want thereof; even every one, through the Lord's help, retiring in his own particular, and furthering the retirings of others to the principle of life, that every one there may feel the washing from what hath in any measure corrupted, and the new-beggetting into the power of life. From this, the true and lasting unity will spring amain, to the gladding of all hearts that know the sweetness of it, and who cannot but naturally and most earnestly desire it. Oh! mark therefore, the way is not by striving to beget into one and the same apprehension concerning things, nor by endeavouring to bring into one and the same practices; but by alluring and drawing into that wherein the unity consists, and which brings it forth in the vessels, which are seasoned therewith and ordered thereby. And from this, let all wait for the daily new and living knowledge, and for the ordering of their conversations and practices in that light, and drawings thereof; and in that simplicity and integrity of heart, which the Spirit of life at present holdeth forth and worketh in them; and the life will be felt, and the name of the Lord praised in all the tents of Jacob, and through all the inhabitants of his Israel; and there will be but *one heart, and one soul, and one spirit, and one mind, and one way and power of life*; and what is already wrought in every heart, the Lord will be acknowledged in, and his name praised; and the Lord's season contentedly waited, for his filling up of what is wanting any where. *So, the living God, the God of Israel, the God of everlasting tender bowels and compassions to Israel, fill the vessels of his heritage with his life, and cause the peace and love of his holy nature and Spirit to descend upon their dwellings,*

*and to spring up powerfully in them towards his living truth, and towards one another.*

And let all strive to excel in tenderness, and in long-suffering, and to be kept out of hard and evil thoughts one of another, and from harsh interpretations concerning any thing relating to one another. Oh ! this is unworthy to be found in an Israelite towards an Egyptian ; but exceeding shameful and inexcusable to be found in one brother towards another. How many weaknesses doth the Lord pass by in us ? How ready is he to interpret every thing well concerning his disciples, that may bear a good interpretation ! “The spirit,” saith he, “is willing ; but the flesh is weak.” When they had been all scattered from him upon his death, he did not afterwards upbraid them ; but sweetly gathered them again. O dear friends ! have we received the same life of sweetness ? Let us bring forth the same sweet fruits, being ready to excuse, and to receive what may tend towards the excuse of another in any doubtful case ; and where there is any evil manifest, wait, oh ! wait, to overcome it with good. Oh ! let us not spend the strength of our spirits in crying out of one another because of evil ; but watch and wait, where the mercy and the healing virtue will please to arise. *O Lord, my God, when thou hast shown the wants of Israel in any kind sufficiently (whether in the particular, or in the general) bring forth the supply thereof from thy fulness, so ordering it in thine eternal wisdom, that all may be ashamed and abased before thee, and thy name praised in and over all !—Works, vol. ii. p. 457.*

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CONCERNING THE SEED OR INWARD PRINCIPLE,  
*whereby life is begotten and maintained in the  
 heart; [with some Directions as to giving way to  
 the movings thereof.]*

THE Lord God, who is full of everlasting bowels of compassion towards mankind in general, (but more especially towards those, in whom he hath begotten a sense of the want of him, with breathings and desires after him,) hath chosen a seed or inward principle of life to appear in, towards the breaking the bonds of their captivity, and the bringing them from under the power and misery of death.

Many who have been overwhelmed with misery, and whose spirits have melted and failed with the want of the sense of their God, and have felt that life, which was formerly built up in them, broken down and laid waste; and their communion with God swallowed up in the ruins thereof; and their souls ready utterly to perish and be devoured by the enemy every moment; after the cutting off of their hopes, and the shutting up of their eyes towards all ways of relief; I say, after all this, and much more than can be expressed, in the tender mercy of the Lord, [many such] have felt this principle revealed in their hearts; and their hearts by degrees, through the skill and same mercy of the Lord, which revealed the principle, (and not from any worthiness, or faith and obedience of theirs; for that was as freely given and preserved, as the principle itself was revealed,) gathered into the principle, where the life reigns, and where the strength and dominion of death is broken in all

those, who by the allurings and guidings of the Spirit of the Lord are led thither.

Now the main thing necessary towards the redemption of the soul is, after the revealing of this principle, and some sense and feeling of it, and the turning of the mind towards it, to wait to be made more and more acquainted with it, that in the stirrings, movings, and leadings thereof, there be a ready giving up to be gathered into it, and to be guided by it.

For though this principle be all life, yet it is at first but as a seed, and the appearance of the Lord in it is but as in a seed; very little, low, weak, hard to be discerned, easy to be overlooked and despised, and some greater and more undeniable appearance expected. Yet, that is not the way, but the soul must become subject unto, and bowed under this little appearance; and so as the seed gets advantage, and grows bigger and larger in thy heart, the appearance of the Lord will be greater and fuller there. But, to look for the greater appearance, before the seed be owned and received in its lesser appearance, and the vessel thereby fitted for the greater appearance, is not the way of God, but the deceit of the enemy, whereby he would destroy the soul, and cut it off from the Lord for ever; which he certainly will do, if he can keep the seed from growing there, and the soul from joining with and growing into it.

Therefore, watch to feel the savour of life in thy heart day by day, and therein to feel leadings and drawings from the life, suitable to thy state; for in this savour, and in these drawings, rises the true light, which leads into the way of life. And then, watch against the reasonings and disputations

which the enemy will raise in thy mind, who will strive to make thee a judge over these drawings; whereas the light, which ariseth in the savour and in the drawings, is thy King, (though in this low appearance,) and not to be judged by thy mind, thoughts, and reasonings, but to judge them all down, and be bowed unto and obeyed by thee. And consider, in the weight of thy spirit, art thou, in thy darkness, and with thy earthly mind, fit to be a judge concerning the light which ariseth in thee? Or rather, is not the light, in its lowest and weakest appearance, appointed and fitted by the Lord to judge thee, and make thee bow down in fear and trembling before it? and thy crown (thou in thy highest exaltation) is to be cast at the lowest footstep thereof; and then it will in some measure, thou lying at the foot thereof, and bowing in spirit before it, enter into thee, and enlighten and quicken thee. But, in thy being wise about it, or taking upon thee to judge concerning it, it will stand at a distance from thee, and leave thee in thy darkness and captivity.

Therefore, consider where thou art, and breathe unto the Lord to reveal that unto thee, which is proper for thee at present, and to bow thy spirit under his present will and manifestation to thee.

And be content to be little and low, and to receive little and low instructions from God, and to walk in the path of brokenness and humility before the Lord; for this is his way of fitting for, and advancing into the high and glorious power of his life. And this my soul is assured of, that none shall enter into or abide in his kingdom, but as they become little, poor, and naked, and as they are led by the little child of God's begetting; who



not at all answers the wisdom of man and his expectations, but still confounds them, and leads on in such a path, as, if the eye of man's wisdom be open, it will still be crying out, it can never bring to life. Yet, that which disputeth not, but believeth, at seasons feels a progress, and that the growth of life had advantage in the heart by those very things, which at present seemed to give death the advantage.

Therefore, watch against thy understanding and all the workings thereof, as ever thou desirest life; for, it will still betray thee, and either keep thee from the way, or turn thee out of the way, whenever thou hearkenest to it. And mark this: That which God sows and brings up in thee, is a sensible plant, not a knowing mind; and thy right judgment is only in the sensibleness of that plant, and not in the understanding or comprehension of thy mind; yea, that sensible plant (which thy wisdom will be very apt to despise and perk over) must batter down and bring to nothing thy understanding, and grow up in the stead of it, if ever thy soul be made an habitation for the life. Therefore, sink into the feeling, and dwell in the feeling, and wait for the savour of the principle of life, and the touches and drawings of the savour, and walk along in it towards the land of life, parting with all, and leaving behind thee whatever the savour of life disrelisheth; and entering into, and taking up whatever the savour of the life relisheth, that thou mayst be prepared for the Lord, and for the glorious appearances of his Spirit in thee.

And as thou art led into this, and becomest subject to this; so thou wilt taste the Lord, and feel the sweetness of his ointment, and the peace of his

nature, and the joy of the beginnings of his kingdom in thy heart, and the blotting out of thy iniquities for his own name's sake. For though the enemy may lay a load upon thee, and fill thee as much as he can with his filth, and lay it close to thy charge, insomuch as thou are not able to acquit thyself at all, but art as ready to charge thyself therewith, as the enemy is to charge thee; yet the Lord considereth the seed he hath sown in thee, and the desire which he hath wrought in thy heart to be joined thereunto; and he knoweth whence the stirring of this mind is, and how weak thou art in this hour of thy darkness and captivity; and the intent of his heart is to deliver thee from all this, and not to condemn thee for it.

But oh! take heed of limiting the Lord to give forth so clear a light, as the natural understanding will be judging necessary; but be content with the light which ariseth in the savour, and shineth inwardly to thy spirit in the drawing; and be subject and bowed under the light of the drawing, though ever so much against the light of the creaturely understanding and the reasonings thereof.

Clearness of light is a state which is to be grown up into; but before thou comest to this, thy understanding must be darkened, confounded, and brought to nothing; and thou canst not have such a clearness there, while it is confounding. There is, indeed, a true clearness in the principle of life, proportionable to its state and growth, even then; but the reasonings of thy dark mind will be continually overclouding and overbearing it, as if it were darkness, and not the light, and will prevail, unless thou be kept in the savour, and suffer not thy understanding to judge, but keep it under the

judgment of the savour. Mark, therefore, heedfully this which follows :

The first work of the Lord, is to confound the knowledge and understanding of the creature ; especially in those, who have been deep in wisdom and experience of things ; for if they were not closely pursued with darkness and confusion, they would presently be gathering a stock into the old storehouse again, and so grow wise after the flesh, and never learn the life of the Spirit. Now, in this work of confounding, how can the leadings of God's Spirit be manifest and clear after the flesh, and to the fleshly understanding ? Yea, if they were manifest after this manner, how were it possible to withhold the fleshly part from drinking them in ? and so the man would live again, but the seed not live, which gains its life, and being, and form, and perfection in the man, by the death of the man ; even by the man's being hunted, and battered, and broken out of his wisdom, and knowledge, and reasoning, and comprehension ; and becoming as a fool or child ; being able to know nothing, nor retain nothing, nor perform nothing, nor keep his standing ; but still as he is led, and taught, and created, and preserved in the power, and by the presence of the life.—*From a Piece entitled, " Concerning God's seeking out his Israel,"* 1663. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 481.

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CONCERNING CHRIST; *coming to the Father by him; receiving him; walking in him; not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit; and concerning reading the Scriptures aright.*

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me,” saith Christ. John, xiv. 6.

MAN, in the corrupt, degenerate estate, is fallen from God, and hath lost his image, the holy, heavenly image of the Father of Spirits: is driven out from his presence, dwells in the land of darkness and confusion, under the government of the prince of the power of the air, who rules in and hath power over all the children of disobedience.

Now, this should be man's work; even to return to the Father; to come back out of the prodigal lost state, to the Father's house; where there is sufficiency and fulness of true bread and water of life to satisfy every hungry and thirsty soul.

The way whereby a man must come, the truth wherein he must be renewed, the life wherein a man must be quickened, is Christ, the Son of the living God; and he must know him as the Son of the living God, and feel him revealed in him, and received by him, and so walk in him the way, in him the truth, in him the life, if ever he come to the Father. He must not rest in the description of things; but feel and know, receive and walk in the *thing*, which by the Spirit of the Lord hath been often formerly and is still described, in what words and by what means the Spirit pleaseth. But, to receive all the descriptions of him that were for-

merly given forth, or all the descriptions that are now given forth, that will not do ; but the soul that will live by him, must receive him, and feel the ingrafting into him the holy root, the living word of God's eternal power, and must feel this word ingrafted into his heart, so that there be a real becoming one in nature and spirit with him. And then, he is truly in the vine, in the olive-tree, and partakes of the virtue and sap thereof ; he abiding therein, and walking in the spirit, life, and power thereof.

Now here a man walks not, nor cannot walk, in the oldness of the letter ; but in the newness of the Spirit only. Paul, notwithstanding all his knowledge of the Scriptures, walked but in the oldness of the letter, before Christ was revealed in him. And those in the apostles' days, who had got the form of godliness, but turned from and denied the power, they walked but in the oldness of the letter. Yea, the church of Sardis (for the most part) and the church of Laodicea, who had received the right order and ordinances, and the true descriptions of things, and thought they were full and rich, and wanted nothing, they walked but according to the oldness of the letter, and not in the newness and power of the Spirit of life. But, alas ! how far are many, who pretend to Christ in this day, from this state, who never came so far as to walk in the oldness of the letter, from a true understanding thereof ; but have only learned and continue to walk in the oldness of their own apprehensions and conceivings upon the letter.

Can these, in this state, possibly understand truth, or know the inward, spiritual, precious appearances thereof, either in their own hearts, or others ? Surely no. Why so ? Why, this is the reason : because they measure the appearances of

truth, either in themselves or others, by their own old apprehensions and conceivings upon Scriptures concerning truth; which are not the proper measure of it. Now, all such are yet in darkness, let them pretend what they will, and grow ever so high in knowledge, exercises, and experiences after this manner; and so the best, most zealous, and most knowing of them in this state, are but blind leaders of the blind, and, thus going on, shall most certainly fall into the ditch of perdition. Oh! that men could feel that which makes rightly sensible, and might lay it to heart! For no man can confess Christ (how then can he receive him, and walk in him?) but by the Holy Spirit.

And he that knoweth not the Spirit rightly, knoweth not Christ rightly; and he that doth not know him rightly, doth not confess him rightly; and none can know him rightly, but by the revelation of the Father inwardly. The mystery must be opened within, or there is no true knowing. The mystery of deceit is discovered within, and the mystery of life is discovered within also. And though the heart of man, in the unregenerate state, is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and no man of himself can search or know it; yet this is not the estate of the true Israelites whom God hath cleansed, and taught to deny themselves daily; but they have boldness before that God who hath searched them, and removed from them the iniquities which he found therein. Yea, whoever witnesseth Christ revealed within, shall find him revealed within for this very end, to destroy the works of the devil there; and he is a powerful Saviour of the soul from sin, and a powerful destroyer of the works of the devil within.

Now, concerning reading the Scriptures, mind this: It is said of the Jews, that when they read Moses, or in reading the Old Testament, the veil was upon their heart; which veil is done away in Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15. Oh! consider seriously, is the veil done away from thee? Dost thou read the Scriptures with the unveiled eye? Dost thou read in the anointing, in Christ's Spirit, in the pure heavenly wisdom of the divine birth? It was promised of old, that God would take away the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil spread over all nations. Dost thou witness the promise fulfilled to thee? Dost thou know the difference between reading the Scriptures with the veil on thee, and with the veil off? Are the Scriptures opened and unlocked to thee by the key of David, so that thou readest and understandest them in the light and demonstration of God's Holy Spirit; or is thy own understanding and will at work of itself, in searching into the Scriptures? If the wrong birth, the wrong wisdom, the wrong understanding, be at work, it can gather but that which will feed and strengthen itself; and if thou be not in Christ, and dost not read in Christ, the veil is not taken away from thee (for the veil is only done away in him;) but thou readest and walkest in the oldness of thy apprehensions upon the letter, and not in the newness of the Spirit; and so knowest neither the Scriptures, nor the power of God, whatever thou professest to men, or dreamest concerning thyself. For it is no other indeed; thy knowledge, thy apprehensions, thy faith, thy hope, thy peace, thy joy (being out of the compass of the pure living truth, in which the substance, the

virtue, the kernel of all is comprised and comprehended for ever) are but as so many dreams.

Oh ! that men that are any whit tender, and have any sincere desires in them towards the Lord, could read that one Scripture, Psalm xliii. 3, 4, sensibly and experimentally : “ Oh ! send out thy light and thy truth ! let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.” What ! did not David know how to go to the hill and tabernacles of God, without a particular sending forth of light and truth from God to lead him thither ? Then may men go to the altar of God, unto God their exceeding joy, and witness his hill and house their dwelling-place, when God, by his light and truth, sent forth from him into them, leads them thither.

The Scriptures are words, whose chief end, drift, and service is, to bring men to the Word from which the Scriptures came. And when men are there, then they are in the life of the Scriptures, and witness the fulfilling of the Scriptures, even the executing the righteous judgments of God upon that spirit, mind, and nature in them, which is contrary to his image ; and the fulfilling of the promises and sure mercies, which belong to Christ the seed, and to them who are gathered into and abide in Christ the seed. Here is the covenant, the new covenant. That which is said, or those things which are said, concerning the covenant in the Scriptures, are but descriptions of the new covenant ; but Christ within, the hope of glory, the Spirit within, the fear within, the power of life within, breaking down and reigning over the power of sin and death ; (so that the Lord is served in the dominion and power of his own life, in



the righteousness and holiness before him, out of the fear of sin and death, all the days of our lives; so that captivity can lead captive, nor break the soul's peace no more; nay, not so much as make afraid those that keep their habitation on God's holy mountain;)—here is the covenant indeed, the strength and virtue whereof is witnessed in the soul, as the soul feels the power of life revealed in it, and is made subject by the power of Christ, who reigns in righteousness, love, mercy, and peace, in the hearts of those whom he redeems out of the earthly nature and spirit, up to the mind and Spirit of his Father. And here the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, the pure songs (the song of Moses, the song of the Lamb,) are sung to the Father of spirits, to the Redeemer of Israel; which never were sung, nor can be sung, in any part of Babylon.—*From a Piece entitled, "Concerning the Sum or Substance of our Religion,"* &c. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 547.

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A FEW WORDS CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLE OF TRUTH; *What it is, How it may be discerned, and How it may be purchased and possessed.*

*Quest.* 1. WHAT is the principle of truth?

*Ans.* It is the light, which reprove and makes sin manifest. "Whatsoever doth make manifest light." Wherefore he saith, "Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead," &c. Eph. v. 13, 14. There is no other way of awaking out of sleep, and arising from the dead, but by the light which

makes sin manifest. And, how precious is that light!

Q. 2. How may the principle of truth be discerned?

A. By its piercing, quickening nature, which discovereth itself in its appearances and operations. For it appears and works, not like man's reason, or like motions of his mind which he takes into his understanding part; but it appears and works livingly, powerfully, and effectually in the heart.

Man's reason is corrupt, dark, impure, since the fall; and in the hand and under the power of the wicked one. Its nature is to hide and cover sin, not to discover it. Now the light of the law, which discovers sin, ariseth not hence. Who can bring the clean, pure light of the law, out of the unclean, impure reason of man? The light indeed may shine in the darkness; but it is no part of it, but of another nature and descent. It is from God's Spirit, and given to man in his love unto him, to lead him out of his dark ways and spirit, into the pure Spirit and way of holiness. For the light which discovers sin, is all holy and pure, like the fountain from whence it comes. Now, a man that is acquainted both with reason and with this light, he can distinguish the nature and operations of both. For there is a great difference between truth held in the reasoning part, and truth held in its own principle. It is very powerful in the one; it effecteth little in the other. In the pure quickenings of life, this distinction is perceived and also held. Therefore, our advice is to all men, to retire from all mortality, that they may come to feel the spring of life in themselves, and something springing therefrom into them to quicken

them, and to wait to have their understandings opened and kept open by that; that so they may receive, retain, and not again lose the capacity of understanding the things of God's kingdom.

*Q. 3.* How may this principle, seed, or pearl, be purchased and possessed?

*A.* By dying to a man's own wisdom and will. There is not another way. For the light is wholly contrary to man, as he stands in the alienation from God. It crosseth his spirit, his thoughts, his desires, his knowledge, his reason, his understanding; even all that is of himself. He must therefore consult with none of these, but prefer the little, pure demonstration of the light of Christ's Spirit above all these, and stand in the parting with and loss of them all for ever. Oh! this is an hard saying, who can bear it? Surely none but those that are taught and learn of the Father, can thus come to give up to and follow the light of the Son.

"The law of the Lord is perfect; converting," or restoring, "the soul," *Psa. xix. 7.* What law was this, or what law is this? Was it the law of works in the hand of Moses? Or is it the law of faith in the hand of Christ? Doth not Christ enlighten every man that cometh into the world? Would not God have all men to be saved? And doth he not give to all a proportion of the true light whereby they may be saved? And is it not the property of this light to convert to God? Can any man receive this, and be united to this, and it not change his nature? So that he must needs have a new nature, and from that new nature, do that naturally, which the Jews, by all their endeavours without this, could never do.

Can any thing convert fallen man to God, but

Christ? Hath any thing power to convert to God, but his pure law of life? Can Christ and his light be separated? Can any man receive his light, and be united thereto, and not receive him? Oh! that men's hearts and understandings were opened by the Spirit and power of the Lord! For this is a direct riddle to all men, who have not God's heifer to plough with, to understand it by. And so, for want of a true understanding, it is despised and rejected among the builders; but with us it is elect and precious, chosen of God, and precious in the eye of our souls.

Now, this doth not exclude or make void any thing, that Christ did in his body of flesh here on earth, or that he doth in heaven for his; but this brings unto a right, and into a possession and enjoyment of his purchase. For all that are in the darkness, and walk in the darkness, have nothing to do with Christ in truth and reality, whatever they may profess, and what hopes soever they may feed themselves with; but all that are in any measure of his light, and walk therein, they are so far of him, and have a right to, and share in, all that he did in and from the same light and Spirit.

And this I dare positively hold forth as a standing truth, which hath been sealed unto me by constant experience:—That no man can fall in with and obey the light wherewith he is enlightened, but he must deny himself, and take up a cross to his own wisdom and will; which cross is the cross of Christ, which is the power of God to the salvation of the soul. And he that takes it up daily, and waits upon the Lord therein, shall witness the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to the redemption of his soul; yea, then he shall be able

in true understanding to say, This is light indeed, life indeed, power indeed. That powerful arm which hath saved me from sin, and breaks the snares, devices, and strength of the enemy before me, delivering me daily when none else can, and when my own strength and wisdom is as nothing, I cannot but call Christ, the living power and wisdom of God revealed in me, who will not give his glory to another. For he is the Lord God of pure power and life for evermore; and beside him there is no such Saviour. Yea, blessed be the name of the Lord for ever, the days of mourning after salvation are over with many, and the days of reaping and enjoying salvation are come, which shall endure with the Israel of God for evermore. Amen.—*From the same Piece. Works, vol. ii. p. 556.*

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SOME THINGS OF GREAT WEIGHT AND CONCERNMENT TO ALL. *Some Assertions concerning the Principle and Way of Life.*

1. THAT it is a great and hard matter to come into a capacity of knowing and receiving the truth. It is no hard matter to take up any religion that a man finds in the world. To read Scriptures, to believe what a man finds related there, according to his understanding of them; yea, to believe that he hath the light and help of the Spirit in his reading and understanding; to apply himself also to practise and observe what he finds therein required; and to aim at holiness, &c. this is no hard matter; every man that is serious, and seeks

religion of any kind but in the weight of a man's spirit, may go thus far. But all this administers not the true capacity, but he that meets with it, must go further than thus.

2. That which gives the true capacity is a principle of life from God, and there alone, and nowhere else, can man meet with it and receive it. This principle is the seed of the kingdom, or heavenly leaven, with which the mind must be in some measure leavened, ere it can come into a true capacity of understanding and receiving the truth. And in this leaven must it abide and grow up, if it abide and grow in the true knowledge, &c.

3. That from this principle, and in this principle, not only the true light and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and all spiritual things is given and received; but also the true faith, the true love, the true sanctification, the true justification, the true peace, the true joy, &c. And what of these is not received and held here, is not of the truth, but a garment of men's own forming, and not the covering of the Spirit.

4. That the Spirit himself sows this principle, and is received in this principle. And he that receives this principle, and is born of this principle, receives and is born of the Spirit; and he that receives it not, nor is born of it, neither hath received, nor is born of the Spirit; but is only in the imagination and self-conceit about the things of God, not in the truth, as it is in Jesus.

5. That in this principle the new covenant is made with the soul and entered into; and he that receives this principle from the hand of God, receives life, and enters into the covenant of life, and feels the pure fear, wherein God cleanseth the

heart, and whereby he keeps the heart clean, and feels the laws of God daily writing there by the finger of God's Spirit, and feels the power and sense of the Spirit to teach and cause obedience; so that the yoke, which is hard to the transgressing nature, alienated from the life and power, is easy, and, as I may say, natural, to him that is born of this nature. For, being dead with Christ, and risen with Christ, and changed into the nature of Christ, by the principle which is of him, through the power and Spirit of Christ, which worketh therein; he can say as Christ did, when the Lord calls him to any thing; Lo, I come; it is my meat and drink, yea, my great delight, to do thy will, O God! yea, thy law is written in the midst of my bowels!

6. Among those who are gathered into this principle, and abide in the sense, light, and life of this principle, there is great love and unity. They are of one mind, of one heart, of one soul, of one spirit, of one life, gathered into one demonstration of truth; and there is no jarring, no doubting, no dissenting, &c. All this is out, in the world, in the earthly wisdom, in the earthly professions and walkings: but it is excluded the principle of truth, and them that are gathered into and abide therein.

7. That all that are not gathered into, nor walk nor live in this principle, they are yet in the darkness and error from the pure power of God, and stand and walk in slippery places; and though their way may seem very right, and their estate and condition sure (as to God-wards) in their own eyes and judgment, yet it is not really so; but they are only in a dream concerning the truth, not

in the truth itself; which (how strange soever it may seem to them at present to be affirmed concerning them) yet they shall certainly feel it to be so, when the Lord by his powerful voice and bright appearance of his Spirit awaketh them. For, many things go for truth now with men in the dark, which will vanish like smoke before the light of the day; and then, that only which is truth indeed shall have the glory and praise of being accounted so; and then, what will become of those who have mistook about truth, and are not clothed with the pure wedding-garment, the spotless life and righteousness of the Son, but only with that which they have accounted so?

8. That to those that see in the light of this principle, the mountain of the Lord's house is discovered; and those that abide and grow up therein, they know and experience it established above all mountains, and exalted above all hills; all earthly knowledge, earthly religions, earthly ways, earthly worships, earthly spirits and minds, &c. in their greatest exaltations and glory, being far beneath it. And here, the feast of fat things, and wines on the lees well refined, even the fruit of the vine which gladdeth and refresheth the very heart of God, is fed on and partaken of by those that dwell here. For the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit is here revealed, in the holy house and tabernacles which are built here; and here they make their feast, bringing forth the riches of their nature, spirit, and precious life, on which they feed with the soul, and give unto the soul favour and ability to feed with them; in which food there is the life, strength, righteousness, and joy of the kingdom given forth and received.



9. *That* in the heart which discovers iniquity, reproveth it, witnesseth against it, and striveth with the mind to turn it from it, and to wait for life and power from on high, that is this very principle. In *that* is the divine nature, even the nature of God's Spirit, which was always against sin, and ever will so be, and in all its appearances testifieth against it, and in love to the creature striveth with the creature, to convince it of that in it which is contrary to God, and to draw it to that strength and divine virtue which stoppeth it, beateth it back, and worketh it out of the mind and nature of the creature, as it can get entrance, and is hearkened and subjected to. For there is no salvation, but by the cross and yoke of our Lord Jesus Christ; for in that is the power to crucify the affections and lusts, which lead into sin and death, and will not cease to tempt and lead aside, till the soul be gathered into unity with that, and become subject to that which is contrary to them. So that this is the main thing in religion, even to know Christ revealed in the soul as a standard against corruption, and to be gathered under his banner, which is the cross, or that living principle in the heart which resisteth the corrupt principle; and he that is gathered hither, and continueth faithfully fighting here, shall receive mercy, help, and strength from on high, in every time of need.

10. That the true and certain way of knowledge of the things of God is in the faith and obedience of this principle. It is not by reasoning and considering things in the mind, after the manner of men, that a man comes to know spiritual things; but they are spiritually revealed by God, after a spiritual manner, to the believer, to the obeyer;

and they are revealed to him in his believing, in his obeying, in his waiting, in his holy fearing, in his distrusting of himself, and feeling his own insufficiency, either to attain them or retain them, but as the Lord God makes them manifest in him, and preserves him in the sense of them. "He that doth my will, shall know of my doctrine," saith Christ. This is the way. Wouldst thou know what God requires of thee, what this or that is which appears in this or that sort as truth, whether it be so or no? Mind this principle in thee, mind the pure, the holy light, inward touches and leadings of this pure divine principle; that will make manifest to thee whatever is fit for thee in thy present state to know; and thou art not to desire more, but as a child to rest contented with that portion of knowledge and strength, which the wise and tender Father judgeth fit for thee; and as thy state groweth capable of more, he will not fail to administer to thee. And what he giveth thee is good, seasonable, and proper for thee, which thou mayst safely feed upon and enjoy in the sense and fear of him. But if thou press after what he would not as yet have thee know, thou enterest into the will and wisdom of the flesh; and *there* are the disputes, discontents, murmurings, and ill tempers and dispositions of the mind, which *there* will increase and grow upon thee to thy hurt.

11. That the mind that is gathered here, will find great opposition, both within and without; insomuch as he shall not easily pass from out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of the dear Son, but through many trials, temptations, oppositions, and dangers many ways, for turning the back on the kingdom of darkness, by joining to

the principle of life, in hearkening and subjecting to the life thereof; hereupon the powers of darkness both within and without bestir themselves to hinder the soul's progress, and to bring it back again into subjection under the will and wisdom of the flesh.

O how doth the will and wisdom strive within in a man's own bosom! What risings of the impure are felt against the pure! What secret and subtle reasonings to ensnare and entangle the mind! and if they cannot draw the soul back from the Lord and the living path, then they strive to vex, afflict, and torment it! There is none knows what is felt inwardly by the followers of the Lamb, but those that travel with him in the living path; they are often sensible of that they meet with in their travels, and how it is to abide in the path of salvation, insomuch as they understand the truth of that saying, "If the righteous scarcely be saved." It is scarcely indeed! so subtle, so strong, such a many holds, so many stratagems hath the subtle, twining, crooked, piercing leviathan, to ensnare, perplex, overrun, and entangle them with. And then outwardly, the same flesh, the same earthly spirit and wisdom, the same crooked hellish will, is striving in men without also, to bear down and subject the pure principle in them who are born of God, to their devices and institutions, decrees, ways, customs, &c. which are of the will and wisdom of the flesh. So that, as the apostle said, *through much tribulation is the entrance of the soul into the heavenly kingdom*; and there is no avoiding the many tribulations, but by turning aside out of the way; which, though thereby the flesh get ease for a time, it will be to the greater loss and sorrow in the end.

For the spirit of the world, the wisdom of the world, the nature, religion, worship, and whole course of the world, is contrary to the way of the pure wisdom and Spirit of God, and useth it as its enemy, wherever it findeth it; and they that will not bow to the spirit, wisdom, and way of the world, must feel the force of its beastly claws. For is it not a beastly thing, even far beneath the nature of a man, to persecute that which is good; to hurt, reproach, and pursue the innocent life of the Lamb? And yet this is that which the spirit of the world, (which is not of God, but wise, and seemingly just and righteous in another wisdom, nature, and principle,) always hath done, still doth, and will do to the end.

12. That there is a glorious crown prepared for all those, who are gathered to the Lamb in this principle, and abide with him faithful therein to the end, hearing his voice, believing the demonstration of his Spirit, obeying him in all his motions and requirings, undergoing every yoke, which is appointed by him to yoke down the fleshly nature and mind, and taking up every cross of every kind in meekness, patience, and fear. And there is not only a crown laid up for them at last, but the power of the Lord God is nigh unto them to work all in them, to bear them up through and over all, and to keep them to and in that principle, whereby and whereinto his tender mercy and powerful arm gathered them. For, as the power of the Lord began the work (for there could never any heart be gathered from under the power of darkness to the light which leads out of it, but by the power of the Lord; for the powers of darkness stand between, and would hold and keep their own, did not a

greater power appear and put forth itself for the soul against them;) I say, as the power of the Lord began the work, so the same power alone is able to go on with it and perfect it; and it will go on with it and perfect it upon the same terms it began, and no other. How were the terms at first, but on a giving up of the soul in the faith to the Lord, in the sense of his love and goodness and mercy, touching, and drawing, and making willing? And how is the standing, but in the same giving up still; in abiding with the Lord, in hearkening to the voice of the Lord, in waiting for the wisdom and counsel of the Lord? But if any man draw back from this, if he despise the Spirit and his motions and counsels, and hearken to the voice of a contrary spirit, believing and following it, like the angels that fell, he departeth from his place and habitation, which he had in the drawings, life, and power of God, and is not to God what he was before, nor is God to him what he was before; but the Lord, who loved him before, and delighted in him to do him good, hath now no pleasure in him, he being turned from that which the Lord loveth, and in which he hath determined and appointed to choose, love, and own the children of men; who, as they are gathered thither, are his children; as they that are gathered from thence, into a contrary principle, are the children of the wicked one.

And now, what is of man in all this? Where is the man that can boast before the Lord, who is thus saved? He hath all from a principle; yea, he is gathered into, preserved in, and abideth in this principle by the power, goodness, and mercy of the Lord. The power begins the work in him,

the power accompanies him; the power carries him through, or he falls and miscarries. There is no man can stand any longer here, than he submits to and is upheld by the power, nor act nor suffer, but as the power acts in him and helps him to suffer. Let the man that boasteth, bring forth somewhat of his own, if he can, here. Is the will at any time his own? Doth not he that is spiritual, and in the true sense, always find God to work in him to will, whenever he willeth rightly and holily? And if he cannot will of himself, can he do any thing of himself? Can he believe of himself, pray of himself, wait of himself, resist enemies and temptations of himself; nay, so much as give a look to the Lord at any time of himself? Indeed, in the grace of the Lord, and principle of his life, there is sufficiency: and therein he that is joined to the Lord, and become one Spirit with him, what can he not do here? but that is, as he is new-made in Christ, and as Christ ariseth, lives, and acts in him: which he that is in the true sense and feeling will still acknowledge, not only in his words to men, but in his heart and spirit before the Lord. 1667. *Works*, vol. iii. p. 3.

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SOME FURTHER DIRECTIONS TO CHRIST, *the Principle and Fountain of Life, by way of Question and Answer.*

*Quest.* 1. WHAT is Christ?

*Ans.* He is the Word of eternal life, who is appointed of the Father to give life, and who giveth

life to them that receive him, and obey his gospel. He is the Son of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God, the righteousness of God, the Saviour and salvation of God. The peace, the rest, the joy, the life of the soul. The King, the Priest, the Prophet, the Shepherd of the sheep. The way, the truth, the door, the vine, the olive-tree, into which the living are gathered and engrafted. And he is also an hammer, an axe, a sword, a fire to the corrupt tree and fruit.

*Q. 2.* How is Christ known, received, and obeyed ?

*A.* As a seed ; as the seed of life, as the seed of the kingdom, as a leaven, as salt ; as a little small thing, rising up in the heart against all that is great and mighty. As a branch out of a dry ground ; as a little child to lead, which all the wisdom of man and flesh cannot but despise ; and therefore, that must first be brought down in some measure in the heart, before Christ can be owned in the heart, and subjected to.

*Q. 3.* How is the seed received ?

*A.* By feeling its virtues, manifestations, and operations in the heart, and subjecting thereto.

*Q. 4.* What are its virtues, manifestations, and operations ?

*A.* They are all living, and have all living and powerful effects upon the heart, as they are let in. They are all against darkness, sin, and death ; tending to discover it, to turn the mind from it, to lead out of the captivity, power, and reach of it ; and they are also all for God, tending to prepare the heart for him, and to bring it into union and covenant with him.

*Q. 5.* What is the first operation of the seed to the soul, wherein it is to be waited for, and closed

with, that the soul may come into the further sense and feeling of it ?

*A.* It is according to the state of the soul ; which being in darkness, sin, and death, it appears as a light to discover the darkness, sin, and death, and to lead out of it to the redeeming power. And then, to them that thus receive it, and wait upon it in the fear and humility which it gives and begets, it appears as life, quickening the soul, and as power, enabling it in some measure to live to God, and to walk with him in the way to the kingdom.

*Q. 6.* How comes this way to be hid from some that desire after the Lord, and to know his truth as it is in Jesus ?

*A.* From the subtlety of the enemy, who blinds the eye which alone can see, and stops the ear which alone can hear, and hardens the heart which alone can understand ; and hath devices, snares, and baits, and false reasonings from Scriptures, and from experiences, which any one that hearkens unto, and is entangled and ensnared in, is his captive, and cannot be at liberty to see, or know, or embrace the truth as it is ; but his heart is deceived about it, and filled with prejudices against it. *Therefore such should wait for the true circumcision, that they might hearken to the Lord, come out of the enemy's snares and subtle devices, and live ; as Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3.*

*Q. 7.* But may not these be saved notwithstanding ?

*A.* There is no salvation but in and by Christ Jesus ; and the salvation is not to them that received a bare notion of him under the law, or another empty notion under the profession of the gospel ; but only to them that receive him as he was promised, as the holy seed : for in that alone is



the redemption, freedom from sin, and power of life felt, and nowhere else. So that he that hath not this knowledge of him, hath not the true knowledge; nor he that doth not so believe in him, doth not rightly believe; nor he that doth not so hope in him, doth not rightly hope: and without the true knowledge, the right faith and hope, how can any man be saved?

Therefore awake! awake! O weary, thirsty souls! come to the spring of life; come to the living waters. Become little, that ye may learn of Christ; wait to have your eyes anointed, that ye may see him, and your hearts opened, that ye may know and receive him. Oh! wait for the manifestation of this seed in you, be abased before him, join to him, receive his checks, receive mourning and repentance from him; wait for the light and faith that he gives, and the power that issues from his throne, and ye shall find him the bruiser of the serpent's head, (which none else is able to do,) and the breaker of the bond of iniquity, which keeps down the just, and sets the unjust at liberty, till he dissolve it. And this is sufficient to manifest against all the disputes of the mind, that this is He, and no other, by his doing that which none else can do. This demonstration he gave to the *Jews in the flesh*, in his appearance in flesh; and this demonstration he giveth now to the *Jews in spirit*, in his appearance in Spirit, whereby he satisfieth their hearts, and putteth them out of doubt that it is He. And we must profess to the world (as our hearts are drawn and guided by the Lord, to give forth the testimony we have received of him) that we look not, yea, we cannot look, for another. Whom should we look for besides the

Lamb, besides the Word which was in the beginning, besides him who is one with the Father, and hath the eternal life, wisdom, righteousness, and power of the Father, and manifesteth it in us? We look indeed for more of the same, and the more universal and powerful breaking of it forth; but another thing, another Christ, another life, Spirit, power, &c. we cannot look for. And this we further testify, that whoever receives this testimony in the truth and uprightness of his heart, waiting on that which discovers sin to him, and in simplicity joining and giving up thereto, and walking with him in forsaking the evil and cleaving to the good, in the faith of him and of his power, he shall witness the same thing with us; and all the reasonings, imaginations, and strong-holds of his mind shall be battered down, and come to nothing, before the virtue, power, and life of Him, who thus is pleased to appear and manifest himself after the apostasy, even as he did before, even in an inward principle, an inward seed, an inward light, an inward life, an inward word, an inward power. And, friends and people, mark in your minds, and learn to put a right difference between that which stumbles you, and that which draws and convinces you. What makes any of you own truth at any time? Is it not an inward, lively, powerful touch and demonstration of God's Spirit? What makes you afterwards doubt and question? Is it not another thing, of a different nature from this? Is it not a subtle reasoning, whereby the enemy twines into your spirits, and begets first a doubt concerning, then a prejudice, and at last a great strength against that, which before ye had some sense of and some unity with, in the teachings and

quickenings of the Spirit of the Lord? And what spirit is it in you, that thus worketh in your minds? And whither doth he lead you by these workings and subtle reasonings? O that ye might see, O that ye might feel, the snare, and know with us the preserver therefrom! for we have met with much of this; and had we not been helped by the Lord, and given up to him, we had been entangled to this very day, as ye are. And he that hath helped us, waits to be gracious to you; and O that you would not reject his help, that he might deliver you also! that ye also might bless his name, in feeling the benefit and joy of his preservation. And this is written in true bowels and tender yearning love, that ye might be a little stirred up to wait to know the Father's house, and might feed on the bread which abounds therein, and drink of the water which makes fresh and living to God, and be clothed with the raiment which the master of the family gives to his spouse, children, and servants.—*From the same*, p. 11.

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*An Objection answered*, in an Extract from THE  
HOLY TRUTH AND PEOPLE DEFENDED.

*Objection.* If Christ be but a principle, then we are no other; and only principles shall be saved, and no persons: is this your gospel?

*Ans.* Christ is the promised seed, to which all the promises are, in which seed all the families of the earth are blessed, as they are gathered unto, and grafted into him. But he is not only the seed, but the seedsman also; who soweth of his life,

of his nature, of his Spirit, of his heavenly image, in the hearts of the children of men. He giveth a measure of the grace and truth unto them, the fulness whereof he hath received of his Father. Now, this measure of the light eternal is very precious, and is that wherein he appears and manifests himself. Yea, indeed, glorious things are both spoken and witnessed of the seed of life, of the seed of the kingdom, of the grace and truth which comes by Jesus Christ; but we never said that this seed or measure of life is the fulness itself, but that which the fulness imparts to us, and brings salvation home to our doors by. And if any man will receive Christ, he must receive that from Christ wherein he manifests himself. There is a difference between the light which enlighteneth (the fulness of light, which giveth the measure of light, the measure of anointing to us) and the measure or proportion which is given; the one is Christ himself, the other is his gift; yet his gift is of the same nature with himself, and leavens those that receive it, and abide in it, into the same nature: so that, not only the gift is one with him, but we also are one with him in the gift. Come, be not thus wise after the flesh, nor do not strive so, in thy wisdom and knowledge out of the truth, to triumph over the truth, and truth's testimony, in this the day of God's great love, and glorious arm of salvation, revealed in the midst of his people, which he hath gathered out of Babylon, and the dark knowledge thereof, into the light and kingdom of his own dear Son; where he giveth them eternal life, and of the fruits of the good and heavenly land.

*Objection.* Christ is a person, and his Spirit is

a living principle in the hearts of all the faithful ; but it is not the Spirit or principle in us that did redeem us, but the man Christ Jesus.

A. If, by the man Christ Jesus, [is meant] *the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, the heavenly man, the Lord from heaven, he who is One with the Father, the Word which was in the beginning, which created all things*, I grant him to be the Redeemer : for it was he *who laid down his glory, wherewith he was glorified before the world was, and made himself of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a servant, and came as a servant, in the fashion of a man, to do the will*. But if [the objector] distinguish Christ from this Word and Spirit, and make the man's nature the Saviour, and the Godhead only assistant to him, (as these his words seem to imply,) *that* I utterly deny. For so testifieth the Scripture, "I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour. I am a just God, and a Saviour," &c. So that Christ is the Saviour, as he is one with God. It was God's arm and power revealed in him that effects salvation. Yea, if I may so speak, his obedience was of value, as it came from the Spirit, and it was the *offering it up through the eternal Spirit* that made it so acceptable to God. So that we must not attribute redemption originally to him as a man, but as he came from God ; and bring the honour all back to the spring and fountain from whence he had all, that God may be all in all, and the very kingdom of Christ may endure and abide for ever, in the root of life from whence it came.

And so he is not a foundation or the cornerstone distinct from God. He, as the foundation, was and is the rock of ages, the spiritual rock, both

before and since he took upon him the body prepared for him. It is the Spirit, the life which was revealed in that man (by which he did his Father's will) which was and is the foundation whereupon all the living stones are built. There is a foundation of death, and that is the wicked spirit; there is a foundation of life, and that is the Holy Spirit, by which Christ himself was led and guided, in that his appearance in the flesh, which descended upon him, and he was anointed with, and all his are to be anointed with, and live in the same Spirit. And he that knows Christ in this Spirit, he hath the true and abiding knowledge of him, and no otherwise. And though the names *Messiah, Jesus, Christ, Saviour, Anointed, &c.* were given to him as in the flesh, or as man, they most properly and originally belong to him with respect to the divine life and birth in him, as the sent-one, *and only-begotten, proceeding from the Father, the brightness of his glory, &c.* For he, as the eternal Son of God, was the spiritual rock before he took upon him that body which was prepared for him, which expressly was called "the body of Jesus," and which he called "this temple;" and distinctly, he being called *Jesus Christ come in the flesh, which every spirit that confesseth not, is not of God, but is that spirit of antichrist, 1 John, iv. 3.—Works, vol. iii. p. 257.*

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THE END OF CHRIST'S MANIFESTATION, *his Salvation, and whom he saves.*

CHRIST came (and is manifest in the hearts of those that receive him) to destroy the works of

the devil, and to set the soul free from sin ; and whom he maketh free, are free indeed. Is the liberty which the Son giveth inferior in this life, in its kind, to the captivity and bondage of the enemy in its kind ? Which of them is stronger ; the enemy to enthrall, or the Lord Jesus Christ to set free from his thralldom ? Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation, the mighty Saviour, who is more able to save than the enemy to destroy, delivereth his Israel out of the hands of their enemies, and so mightily and powerfully delivereth them, that they are able (in the power of his might) to serve him, without fear of them any more, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of their life.

It is true, there is a state of darkness, sin, and death, wherein Satan reigns ; and there is a state of weakness, wherein Satan much prevails, if the watch be not strictly kept to him, who is the everlasting strength ; and there is a state of sighing and groaning under the body of sin and death, and crying out, Who shall deliver from it ! But there is also a state of growth in the life, and of victory through the life, over that which captived and caused to cry out. There is a treading down of Satan under the feet by the God of peace, inso-much as not only the elders, but the very young men in Christ, overcome and triumph over him, feeling the entrance ministered to them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom, into which no unclean thing can enter. Oh ! wonderful is the travel to the holy rest of the pure life ! Happy are they that meet with the true Leader, and faithfully follow him, till they have travelled through and overcome all that stands in their

way! For to them, and to them alone, is the promise of the possession of the everlasting inheritance; and such find and feel the Lord to be their God indeed, and themselves to be his children, brought forth in his holy life and nature; which to feel in truth and certain knowledge is more than tongue can utter.

Christ saves only those that come unto him, and believe in him, and so are born of his Spirit, and by the faith, and through the strength and virtue of his Spirit, overcome the wicked one, his works, snares, and temptations in their hearts. And these feel in themselves the root of his life, the holy seed of his kingdom springing up in them, into which they are ingrafted, and become one with him, and so bringing forth the holy fruit, and living grapes, the new and righteous conversation, wherein the life of God shines, and is glorified. Now, it is not knowing, or believing, or receiving any thing into the old understanding that avails with God, or the reformation which is there wrought; but the new creature alone, created of God in Jesus Christ. This is born of God, this lives in him, this is clothed with him. This puts off the old man with his deeds, and puts on the newness of the nature and Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ; so that this man is as really in Christ, in the Spirit, in the new Adam, found in him, formed in him, covered with him, as the first man, or nature, is in the old Adam. Therefore, this is the main thing in religion, to mind the seed of the kingdom, the leaven of the kingdom, its growth in the mind, soul, and spirit, and the mind's, soul's, and spirit's gathering into and growth in it. And here is faith, the true faith, the



true love, the true hope, the true meekness, and patience, the true justification and sanctification felt, and not elsewhere; but those that are out of this, out of Christ the seed, out of Christ the Word, out of Christ the wisdom, righteousness, and power of the Father, are only in a dream concerning these things, but know not the truth and real nature of them, as they are felt in Jesus, by those who are truly ingrafted in him, and livingly grow up in him.—*Works*, vol. iii. p. 15.

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SOME QUERIES CONCERNING CHRIST, AND HIS APPEARANCES; *his taking upon him our flesh: as also concerning his flesh and blood, and our being formed thereof, and feeding thereon.*

WHETHER there was not a necessity of Christ's taking upon him our flesh, for the redemption of those that had sinned, and the satisfaction of the justice offended?

Whether the Father did not accordingly prepare a body for him, to do his will in all things in; and particularly to offer up to him the acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the whole world?

Whether it was not necessary, in this respect also, that Christ should take upon him our flesh, that he might have experience of our temptations and infirmities, and become a merciful and faithful high-priest and intercessor for us?

Wherein lay the value and worth of his sacrifice, and of all he did? Did it lie chiefly on the

thing done, or in the life wherein he did it, in that he did it in the pure faith and obedience to the Father? He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and he through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God.

What was he, for whom the Father prepared a body, and who took it up to do the will, and did the will in it? Was he not the arm of God, the power of God, the Saviour and salvation of God, the Jesus and Christ of God?

To whom do the names and titles Jesus and Christ chiefly and in the first place belong? Do they belong to the body which was taken by him, or to him who took the body? The body hath its nature and properties, and the eternal Word, or Son of God, (the pure spotless Lamb, the fountain of innocency) its nature and properties. Now the query is, which was the appointed Saviour of the Father? Which was the anointed of the Father, chiefly and in the first place? Whether the body prepared, or he for whom the body was prepared, to do the will, and offer up the acceptable sacrifice in?

Which is Christ's flesh and blood which we are to partake of, whereof we are to be formed, which we are to eat and drink, and which is meat and drink indeed, nourishing to life everlasting? Is it the flesh and blood of the body, which was prepared for, and taken by him, wherein he tabernacled and appeared? Or is it the flesh and blood of him, who took, tabernacled, and appeared in the body? For that which he took upon him was our garment, even the flesh and blood of our nature, which is of an earthly perishing nature; but he is of an eternal nature, and his flesh, and

blood, and bones are of his nature. Now, as the life and nature which is begotten in his, is spiritual; so that which feeds, and is the nourishment of it, must needs be of a spiritual and eternal nature.

What is the bread which came down from heaven? Is not the bread and the flesh all one? Outwardly-visible flesh and blood was not in heaven, nor came down from heaven; but the bread of life did come down from heaven, which the heavenly birth feeds on and lives by. For that which redeems, that which is Jesus, (the Saviour,) came down from heaven, and took upon him a body of flesh here on earth, in which he manifested himself as King, Priest, and Prophet, and did the work appointed him by the Father, John, xvii. 1, &c.

What was that which saved people outwardly from their outward infirmities and diseases, while Christ was on earth in that body? Was it the body, or the life, power, and Spirit of the Father within the body, and manifest through the body? And can any thing less save inwardly? Now, that which saves, that which hath the virtue and power of salvation in it, that the eye of faith is to fix upon, and not to stick or stop in that, through which the life works it.

Who was he that humbled himself, that made himself of no reputation, that took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and found in fashion (or habit) as a man? Was it the body of flesh, or was it he that was glorified of the Father before the world was? And who is to have the honour and exaltation? At whose name is every knee to bow? Is not the reward to him who laid down his glory to take upon

him the body of flesh, and appear in it, that he might honour, glorify, and fulfil the will of his Father?

Are not the children and he of one? Are not he and they of the same stock? ("Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one," Heb. ii. 11.) Is it from thence that he is not ashamed to call them brethren, even because he finds the nature, Spirit, and life of his Father in them? What makes a child to God? Is it not the being begotten of the Father, and born of the Spirit? And that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit. Now mark: have we the denomination and relation with Christ from that which is spiritual, and hath Christ himself the name from or because of the body of flesh? Nay, nay; the name of Christ was from the anointing which was in the body, which ran into and filled the vessel. It is true, the body, in and by the union, partakes with him of his name; but the name belongs chiefly and most properly to the treasure in the vessel.

What is it to put on Christ, or what is the putting on of Christ? Is it the putting on of that body of flesh? Or the putting on a belief concerning him, according to what is said of him in Scripture? Or is it not rather a putting on of his nature, his seed, his Spirit, his life, wherewith the souls of those that are born from above are clothed, as the body is with a garment?

Who was it that said, I am the resurrection and the life? Was it not Christ? And what did he say it concerning? Did he say it concerning the body, or did he say it concerning the power and virtue of the Father which was in the body? Did he not say it concerning that which had the power

of life in it before it took up the body, and had also the power of life while it was in the body? yea, and could raise up not only other bodies, but that also after it had laid it down? For, after it was laid in the grave, he could raise it up, and take it on again, as well as he did at first, when it was first prepared, John, x. 17, 18.

If I, or any one else, have felt the saving arm of the Lord revealed in us; if we have felt a measure of the same life, power, and anointing revealed in our vessels as was revealed in his, is it not of the same nature? Is it not the same thing? Is not Christ the seed? And is not this seed sown in the heart? Now if this seed spring and grow up in me in a spiritual shape or form, (though it be but of a babe,) is not Christ then formed in me? If I be ingrafted into, and grow up in it, am I not ingrafted into Christ, the true olive-tree, the true vine, and do I not grow up in him? And is not this the same Christ that took upon him the body of flesh, and offered it without the gates of Jerusalem? Is there any more than one, or is there any other than he? Is Christ divided? Is there one Christ within, and another without? He that knoweth the least measure of the thing, doth he not know the thing in some measure? And he that is in the least measure of the thing, is he not in the thing? He that knoweth the Son, doth he not know the Father? And he that knoweth the Spirit, doth he not also know the Son? And he that is in the Spirit, is he not in the Son? For they are one nature and being. A man may have notions of the one, and not of the other; but their nature, their being, their life, their virtue is inseparable. And as Christ said concerning the Fa-

ther, That he was in the Father, and the Father in him; and that he that saw him, saw the Father; so may it not be as truly affirmed (in the true sense and understanding of life) concerning Christ, that he is in the Spirit, and the Spirit in him; and that he that seeth the Spirit seeth him; and he that seeth him seeth the Spirit? For he is the Spirit according to that Scripture, 2 Cor. iii. 17. "Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."——

Now as the Father sent the Son, and yet was with and in the Son; so the Son sending the Spirit, he also is with and in the Spirit. And as it is the Father's will, that the same honour be given to the Son as is given to him; so it is the Son's pleasure, that the same honour be given to his Spirit as is given to him. Yea, as he that will worship the Father, must worship the Son, must come to him in the Son, must appear before him in the Son, must reverence and kiss the Son; so he that will come to Christ, will worship him, must come to him in the Spirit, must bow to him in the Spirit. Yea, he that will know and worship Christ in his fulness, (in the majesty of his glory, dominion, and power,) must learn to bow at the lowest appearance of his light and Spirit, even at the very feet of Jesus; for that is the lowest part of the body.

Did not the bridegroom go away, as to his appearance in flesh, that he might come again in Spirit? Did not the apostles, who knew his appearance in flesh, and his tabernacling among them, know also afterwards his appearance in Spirit, and his tabernacling in them? And were not their hearts filled with joy unspeakable,

and full of glory, because of the presence of the bridegroom? Did they not know the man-child born and brought forth in Spirit, as really as ever he was born and brought forth in flesh? Yea, did they not travail and help to bring him forth? Were there not many in that day, who could say concerning the spiritual and inward appearance of the bridegroom, We know that the Son of God, the eternal life, the pure power and wisdom of the Father, is come? Did they not receive from him the understanding which he gives in and by his coming? Yea, were they not in him that is true, even in Jesus Christ the Son, who is the true God, and life eternal? (1 John, v. 20.) Had they not received the kingdom which could not be shaken? And did they never see and converse with the King in the kingdom? Nay, did not he walk in them, and they in him, and he sup with them, and they with him, in the kingdom? O that ye could read in Spirit! O that ye did receive that measure of life from Christ, which the Father hath allotted you, that ye might read therein; but the letter, read out of the Spirit, darkeneth and killeth.

What is the laver of regeneration, or the water wherewith the *soul* is washed, and whereof a man is born again? Is it outward or inward? Is it the water which ran out of the side of the natural body, when it was pierced with a spear? Or the water which springs from the fountain of life, the water which floweth from the Spirit? What are the waters which corrupt, mud, and defile the mind? Are they outward waters? And what are the waters which purify and cleanse it? Can they be of a lower nature than spiritual? What are the

waters which answer the thirst of the soul after life, after purity, after salvation; that refresh and glad the heart of him that drinketh thereof? Are they not from the pure river, clear as crystal, which runs from the throne? And if the water which cleanseth and nourisheth the *soul* be spiritual; can the flesh and blood (which falleth not short of the water in its virtues, properties, and operations) be inferior to it in nature and kind?

Can outward blood cleanse the conscience? <sup>(1)</sup> Ye that are spiritual consider. Can outward water wash the *soul* clean? Ye that have ever felt the blood of sprinkling from the Lord upon your consciences, and your consciences cleansed thereby; did ye ever feel it to be outward? It is one thing what a man apprehends in the way of notion from the letter concerning the things of God, and another thing what a man feels in Spirit.

Seeing the apostle speaks of purifying the heavenly things themselves, Heb. ix. 23, it would seriously be inquired into, and the Lord waited on, to know what nature these sacrifices must be of, which cleanse the heavenly things? Whether they must not of necessity be heavenly? If so, then whether was it the flesh and blood of the veil, or the flesh and blood within the veil? Whether was it the flesh and blood of the outward earthly nature, or the flesh and blood of the inward spiritual nature? Whether was it the flesh and blood which Christ took of the first Adam's nature, or the flesh and blood of the second Adam's nature?—

Now, is the life, the faith, the obedience of the Son, the thing which is of value in us? And was

(1) See next piece, written in defence and explanation of his meaning.



it not the same which was of value in him? What did the Father require of the Son, for satisfaction for Adam's disobedience? Was it not the obedience of the second Adam, which weighed down the transgression and disobedience of the first? Doth not this make all righteous, who are of him, and found in his nature, as the transgression of the first made all unrighteous? Rom. v. 19. Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not. Lo, I come to do thy will, O God! He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, Heb. x. 9, 10. What can be plainer to that which hath truth's ear? So, by truth manifested in the heart, there is nothing denied of what is said concerning Christ in Scripture, but every thing owned, believed, and received in its proper place.—

Is not the substance, the life, the anointing called Christ, wherever it is found? Doth not the name belong to the whole body, and every member in the body, as well as to the head? Are they not all of one; yea, all one in the anointing? Was not this the great desire of his heart to the Father, that they all might be one, even as the Father and Christ were one, John, xvii. 21, 23. And so, being one in the same Spirit, one in the same life, one in the same divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4, even partakers of God's holiness, Heb. xii. 10. Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren, Heb. ii. 11, nor is the apostle ashamed to give them the name *Christ* together with him, 1 Cor. xii. 12. The body is the same with the head; one and the same in nature; and doth not the name belong to the nature in the whole? So that the name is not given to the

vessel, but to the nature, to the heavenly treasure, to that which is of him in the vessel, to that which the Lord from heaven begets in his own image and likeness, of his own substance, of his own seed, of his own Spirit and pure life.—

What are the robes which are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb? And how are they washed and made white therein? And what is the blood, of what nature? earthly or spiritual? wherein they are washed and made white?

What is it to have, or how come we to have, fellowship with Christ in his death, and to suffer and be crucified with him? Is it by having our natural bodies crucified on the same cross of wood (or some such-like one) as his body was crucified on? Or by having the fleshly nature crucified, subdued, and worn out of our souls, minds, spirits, &c. by the power of the Spirit? Rom. viii. 13. Now, if the flesh we are to put off, be of such a nature and kind; to wit, inwardly and spiritually corrupt; must not the flesh of Christ, which we are to put on instead thereof, be of as deep, inward, and spiritual a nature? What is the flesh whereof we are to be unclothed, before we can be clothed with Christ? Is it outward or bodily? And what is Christ's flesh we are to put on? Is that any more outward or bodily, than that which we are to put off?

Is not the flesh and blood, which they that have eternal life feed on, and which nourisheth them up to life eternal (they continuing to feed thereon, and not feeding afterwards on strange flesh, and strange blood); I say, is not this flesh and blood Spirit and life? For that is it which profiteth, John, vi. 63. Is it not the flesh and blood of the Word? Was not the Word made flesh? And

did not the Word, who was made flesh, dwell and appear in a tabernacle of flesh, and cause the glory of his own divine flesh to shine through that earthly flesh? Oh! read and consider, that ye who have stumbled and murmured against the truth, may stumble or murmur no more, but now at length receive the pure and precious doctrine thereof, and so come to witness the fulfilling of that promise, Isa. xxix. 18—24, and praise him who giveth understanding.

Is not the true church, flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of his bone? Is not the false, or anti-christian church, flesh of antichrist's flesh, and bone of antichrist's bone? What is the flesh of the spiritual whore, which is to be stripped naked and burnt with fire? Shall ever the church, which is of Christ's flesh, be stripped naked and burnt with fire? Nay, doth not his flesh make able to abide the devouring fire, and to dwell with the everlasting burnings?

What is the pure milk of the Word, which is milked out to the babes from the pure breast? And what is the breast from which it is milked out? Is it of the flesh of Christ or no?

Are not the wicked of the seed and flesh of the serpent? Is not that the body of flesh, of sin, of death, which is to be put off? And are not they who are renewed in spirit, of the seed and flesh of Christ? Is not that the body or garment of holiness, of righteousness, of life, which is to be put on?

Is it not as necessary that the eternal Word be made flesh inwardly, that so the children may feed on him, as it was for him to take on him an outward body of flesh, to suffer and die for them,

and to fulfil all righteousness, both of the law of the letter, and of the law of the Spirit in ?

Is there not that which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt? And do not they which dwell there, instead of eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, put his flesh to pain, crucifying it in and to themselves, trampling under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing? Read the figure. Did not outward Israel suffer in outward Egypt? Did not just Lot suffer in Sodom? Doth not the spiritual seed suffer in and by spiritual Egypt? Doth not the flesh of the holy and just one suffer in and by spiritual Sodom?

He that knoweth the substance, the seed of the kingdom, the birth of the Spirit, knoweth the flesh and blood which is of the seed. And this flesh is flesh indeed, this blood is blood indeed, even the flesh and blood of the seed's nature; but the other was but the flesh and blood of our nature, which he honoured in taking upon him, in which he did the will, in which he offered up the acceptable sacrifice; but yet did not give the honour from his own flesh and blood to it. For the flesh and blood of our nature was not his own naturally, but only as he pleased to take it upon him and make it his. But that whereof he formeth us, and which he giveth us to eat and drink, is the flesh and blood of his own nature; and this was it wherein was the virtue, and wherein is the virtue, life, and power for ever. Happy! O happy is he who is of it, who is taken out of and formed of him, (as Eve was of Adam), and so becomes flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone. Then will he know the mystery of life, feed on the thing itself, and not stumble about

appearances and expressions, as those that are out of and from the thing itself do, through the darkness of their mind, and because of their ignorance of the thing spoken of in the Scriptures.—*From "A Question to the Professors," &c. 1667. Works, vol. iii. p. 45.*

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*Extracts from a piece entitled, "THE FLESH AND BLOOD OF CHRIST IN THE MYSTERY AND IN THE OUTWARD," &c.*

THE drift of all those queries in that book was not to vilify the flesh and blood of Christ, by representing it as a common or useless thing, but to bring people from sticking in the outward, to a sense of the inward mystery; without which inward sense and feeling, the magnifying and crying up the outward doth not avail. Indeed, at that time, I was in a great exercise concerning professors: love was deeply working in my heart; and I was in a very tender frame of spirit towards them, as any may perceive, who, in the fear of God, and in meekness of spirit, shall read that book, (it is entitled, *A Question to the Professors of Christianity, whether they have the true, living, powerful, saving knowledge of Christ, or no, &c.*) And in this tender frame, in the midst of my crying to God for them, those queries, from a true sense and understanding, sprang up in my heart, even to necessitate them, if possible, to some sense of the mystery, which there is an absolute necessity of unto true Christianity and salvation. This was the very intent of my heart in the several queries, which ge-

nerally speak of one and the same thing, under several metaphors and figures.

This query, *Can outward blood cleanse the conscience*, &c. doth not necessarily, nor indeed at all, infer that the blood of Christ, as to the outward, was but a common thing, or useless. If I had been to answer this query myself, he doth not know what my answer would have been. It was put to the professors to answer inwardly in their hearts, who I did believe, upon serious consideration, could not but confess, in way of answer thereto, that outward blood itself (or of itself) could not cleanse and purge away the filth that was inward; but that must be done by that which is inward, living, and spiritual. Then hereby, they had been brought to see the necessity of the mystery, the Spirit, the power, the life of the Son, to be inwardly revealed in them; and then I had obtained my end. Nor was I their enemy in desiring or aiming at this for them, or in setting queries before them, which to my eye, as in the sight of God, seemed proper and conducive in themselves (however they might fail as to them) towards the obtaining of this end. And if they could once come to this, to own the flesh and blood in the mystery, and so come to partake of its cleansing and nourishing virtue, and not fix and appropriate that to the outward which chiefly belongs to the mystery; I say, if they could but go thus far with me, in owning the inward life and power in the sensible feeling and operation thereof, I could meet them a great way in speaking glorious things of, and attributing a cleansing or washing virtue to the outward, in, and through, and with the inward. For I do not separate the inward

and outward in my own mind ; but the Lord opened my heart, and taught me thus to distinguish, according to the Scriptures, in love to them, and for their sakes. For that was not my intent to deny the outward, or make it appear as a common or useless thing. There was never such a sense in my heart, nor was ever word written or spoken by me to that end ; which, to make more manifest, I shall now plainly open my heart, how it hath been, and is still with me in this respect, since it pleased the Lord and Father of mercies to reveal the mystery of himself and of his Son in me.

In the first place, I freely confess, that I do own and acknowledge, as in God's sight, **OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, HIS FLESH AND BLOOD IN THE MYSTERY.** The apostle Paul speaks of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, Coloss. ii. 2. The Son was revealed in him, Gal. i. 16, and so he knew the mystery of Christ, and preached the mystery of Christ, Coloss. iv. 3. He was made an able minister of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit or mystery ; and so he preached the wisdom of God in the mystery or Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 7 ; 2 Cor. iii. 6 ; Coloss. i. 25, 26, 27 ; and he had great conflict to bring people to the rich knowledge and acknowledgment of the mystery, chap. ii. 1, 2. He was sent to turn men from darkness, and from the power of Satan (which is a mystery, and works in men's hearts in a mystery) to the light, to the Spirit and power of God, which is a mystery also ; and remission of sins is received in and through this mystery, Acts, xxvi. 18. And I desire every serious and tender heart to consider, whether this knowledge of Christ in the mystery was not that

which he called the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord, Phil. iii. 8. Certain I am, that the knowledge of God and Christ in the mystery is the most excellent knowledge, and no less than life eternal, inwardly revealed and felt from God in the heart. And here no legal righteousness, no self-righteousness can stand; but the virtue and power of Christ's death and resurrection, inwardly revealed and felt in the mystery, subdues and destroys it all. Indeed self-righteousness may be given up in the way of notion, or seemingly destroyed as to men's apprehensions, without the revealing or working of the mystery; but it cannot be destroyed in reality but where this is felt: but where the mystery is known, is received, and thoroughly works, self-righteousness can have no place there. Now the apostle, who was acquainted with the mystery of Christ, he speaks of his body, flesh, and bones, in the mystery, Eph. v. 30, (and if there be flesh and bones in the mystery, is there not also blood in the mystery?) yea, the apostle John speaks of the Spirit, water, and blood, 1 John, v. 8. Now consider seriously, are all these of one and the same nature? or are they of a different nature? the Spirit of one nature, and the water and blood of another nature? Blessed be the Lord, the birth which is born of the Spirit, and is spiritual, knoweth the nature of the Spirit which begat it, and knoweth water which is inward and heavenly, and blood which is not at all of an inferior nature to it: and Jesus Christ, our Lord and teacher, speaketh of flesh which came down from heaven, which flesh is the bread of life, which he that lives, feeds upon, and none can feed upon, but they that live. And by this it is manifest, to



all to whom God hath given understanding in the mystery, that his flesh and blood in the mystery is intended by him, in that he saith, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him," John, vi. 56. This dwelling in each other is an effect of the mystery, and is witnessed by none that know not the mystery. And to this effect Christ himself expressly expoundeth it, ver. 63. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak to you, they are Spirit, and they are life." As if he had said, I am speaking of the soul's food; I am speaking of the heavenly bread; I am speaking of Spirit and life; I am speaking of the mystery, which ye look upon and understand as outwardly intended by me, and so miss of the mystery of the Spirit, wherein is the quickening virtue, and look only at the outward body or flesh, which, without the Spirit, profiteth not, nor ever can profit man.

Secondly, I confess further, that I have the sense, experience, and knowledge of this also, that in the mystery is the quickening virtue, the cleansing virtue, the nourishing virtue, unto life eternal. The Spirit, the water, the blood inwardly sprinkled, inwardly poured by God upon the soul, inwardly felt and drunk in by the thirsty earth, do cleanse, do feed, do nourish, do refresh. Doth not God promise to sprinkle clean water upon his Israel in the new covenant, and they shall be clean? and to pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground? Is it not by the spirit of judgment and burning, that God washeth away the filth of the daughter of Zion, &c. Isai. iv. 4. Doth not the live coal from the altar purify and take away the iniquity? Isai. vi. O read inwardly! O

wait to be taught of God to read inwardly, that ye may know what these things mean ! Why should ye quarrel at the precious and tender openings of truth, in love to your souls ?

Thirdly, I have likewise this sense, and have also had this knowledge and experience, that the outward without this cannot avail. A man is not cleansed by notions or apprehensions concerning the thing, but by the thing itself. Let a man believe what he can concerning the blood of Christ, and apply to himself what promises he can, yet this will not do, (O how grievously do men mistake herein !) but he must feel somewhat from God, somewhat of the new creation in Christ Jesus, somewhat of his light shining from him the Son into the heart, somewhat of his life, somewhat of his power, working against the darkness and power of the enemy in him. Now, a man being turned to this, joined to this, gathered to this standard of the Lord, translated in some degree out of himself into this ; here, somewhat of the mystery is revealed, and found working in him ; and so far he is of God, and hath some true understanding from him. And here, also, he hath right to Christ's flesh and blood in the outward, and to all the benefits and precious effects that come thereby. For by owning the mystery, and receiving the mystery, we are not taught of God to deny any thing of the outward flesh and blood, or of his obedience and sufferings in the flesh, but rather are taught and enabled there rightly to understand it, and to reap the benefits and precious fruits of it.

Fourthly, The Lord hath shown me this also, very manifestly and clearly, that in former times, in this nation as well as elsewhere, before profes-

sors ran so into heaps, (I mean into several ways and forms of church-fellowship so called,) they had more inward sense of the mystery than now they have; and were a great deal more tender, both unto the Lord, and one towards another, than now they are. For then, grace in the heart and the inward feeling, was the thing that was most minded among the stricter sort. They did not mind so much bare reading, or hearing, or praying, or any outward observation whatsoever, as what they felt therein. Let men have spoken ever so many glorious words concerning the things of God; yet, if they had not been spoken warmly and freshly by him that spoke them, there was little satisfaction to the soul that hungered after that which was living, but rather an inward grief and dissatisfaction felt: so that, in that day, there was an inward sense of the mystery, (though not a distinct knowledge of it,) which was precious in the eye of God, and very savoury inwardly in the heart. But now, in so long time, by looking so much outward, and beating their brains, and disputing about the outward, many have very much, if not wholly, lost the sense of the inward, and are found contending for the outward, against the very appearance and manifestation of the inward; and so are in danger of being hardened and sealed up in that which is dead and literal, out of the limits of that which is living and spiritual. It is a dreadful thing to fight against the living God, and his living appearance in the hearts of those whom he chooseth, in any age or generation. The Lord hath been pleased to bring us, a poor despised remnant, back to that which first gave us life, in the days of our former profession. Oh! that ye were brought

thither also, that that might remove the veil, hardness, darkness, and deep prejudices from you; which can never be removed, while ye stick in literal apprehensions, without the light and teachings of God's Spirit!

Now, as touching the outward, which ye say we deny, because of our testimony to the inward, I have frequently given a most solemn testimony thereto; and God knoweth it to be the truth of my heart; and that the testifying to the inward (from which the outward came) doth not make the outward void, but rather establish it in its place and service. God himself, who knew what virtue was in the inward, yet hath pleased to make use of the outward; and who may contradict or slight his wisdom and counsel therein? Glorious was the appearance and manifestation of his Son in flesh; precious his subjection and holy obedience to his Father; his giving himself up to death for sinners, was of great esteem in his eye! It was a spotless sacrifice of great value, and effectual for the remission of sins: and I do acknowledge humbly unto the Lord the remission of my sins thereby, and bless the Lord for it; even for giving up his Son to death for us all, and giving all that believe in his name and power to partake of remission through him.

And seeing it is thus with me: seeing the root of the matter is in me, oh! how can any man, that hopes to be redeemed by my Lord and Saviour, reproach me for speaking of the mystery, without the least derogation to the outward, or what was done by him in the outward! But if I should speak vehemently concerning men's neglecting the mystery, and setting up that which is

outward instead of it and without it, I should not be condemned, but justified of the Lord in so doing. Indeed, there is a great and weighty charge from God's Spirit upon the professors of this age, for departing from the inward, (I mean that sweet sense, which, in some measure, God gave them in former times of the inward) and magnifying and striving to establish that which they apprehend concerning the outward, without it, and against it. Oh! that it were otherwise with them, that God may not have this charge to manage against them, when at the great day they are to appear before him, and be judged by him! When all that have slighted or spoken contemptuously of his Son's appearance in flesh, and have not come to a sense thereof, and repentance for it, shall be condemned; and they that have slighted or spoken contemptuously of his appearance in Spirit, shall not be justified: which appearance is now made manifest in the hearts of many, blessed be the Lord for it! Oh! what cries have been in my heart many years concerning you, O ye professors of all sorts who have had any tenderness towards the Lord! that ye might see and know the Lord Christ; and confess him in Spirit, in the mystery, even in his inward appearance in the heart, and might feel his redeeming power and virtue there, and so be brought into union and fellowship with him!

#### POSTSCRIPT OR CONCLUSION.

THERE is a precious promise of God's making a feast of fat things on his holy mountain, and of destroying there the face of the covering, cast over

all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations, Isaiah, xxv. 6, 7. Now, what is this mountain? Was there not a Mount Zion under the law, which was figurative? and is there not a Mount Zion under the gospel, which is the substance of that figure? and did not the Christians in the apostles' days, who were called of God and sanctified, come to this Mount Zion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where they had fellowship with God the Judge of all, and with Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, &c.? Heb. xii. 22, 24. And was not the veil here done away in him who was their Lord, their light, their life, their strength, their sun of righteousness, their bright and morning star? so that with open face they could behold the glory of the Lord, and were changed thereby into his heavenly image, from glory to glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

But alas! how hath that life, Spirit, and power been lost, since the days of the apostles! Men have still owned the apostles' words, and formed many notions and apprehensions out of the letter, but lost the apostles' spirit, lost the knowledge of the holy mountain, where the veil is taken away, and where the feast of fat things is made; and so, are only dreaming about eating and drinking spiritually, but know not what it is to feed on the living substance. And so, (being ignorant of that,) the veil is over their hearts while they read the prophets' words, and Christ's and his apostles' words; and the mystery of life, and of the redeeming power, is hid from their eyes: and that which God intended to them for a table, is become their snare, as it was with the Jews; and their back is so bowed down under the loads and

burdens of the enemy, that they cannot so much as hope or believe in the power of life for redemption therefrom, but conclude it must necessarily be so with them all their days.

Oh! where is the faith that gives victory over the enemies? Where is the ability in the faith, so to resist him as to make him fly? Where is Satan's falling like lightning? (Oh! his strength before the power of the Lord is but a flash!) and the God of peace his treading him under the feet of his saints? Oh! where is that truth, or that knowledge of the Son, which makes free from him? John, viii. 32, 36. Where is that Spirit, wherein liberty from his power and snares is felt? 2 Cor. iii. 17. Where is living in the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit, and in the pure light of the Lord, where he cannot come? Where is reading of the Scriptures in that, which gives to witness them, and which fulfils them in the heart?

Oh! the mystery of godliness, the power of godliness, where the life is revealed, and the veil taken away, and an understanding given, opened, and kept open to read and understand the Scriptures aright; yea, and the hidden glory also! Where it cannot be said in truth to those that are there, Ye know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God; but ye have received power to become sons of God, and ye are in him that is true; who truly opens the Scriptures in your hearts, and gives you the enjoyment, inheritance, and possession of the precious promises, whereby ye are made partakers of the divine nature, and live in him who is the head and spring of that nature. O that people that profess Christ were here! O that they did know him who begets! and then they would not

be so ignorant of those that are begotten by him ; but would come into the true faith, into the true love, into the true knowledge and obedience of him, whom God hath appointed to guide and govern, and build up the whole living body. The Lord guide me inwardly thither, where the mystery is revealed, and the fellowship with God, and his Son and saints, held in the mystery ! For our fellowship is not in a notional knowledge concerning Christ, but in the life itself ; which the Lord God gather his people more and more into, and build them more and more up in. Amen. 1675. *Works*, vol. iii. p. 408.

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AN INCITATION TO PROFESSORS *seriously to consider, Whether THEY or WE fail in the true acknowledgment and owning of the CHRIST which died at JERUSALEM.*

WE, who are commonly called Quakers, being a people whom the Lord hath gathered out of the wanderings, out of the many professions, out of the several scattered estates and conditions, wherein his eye pitied us, and his love found us out, into a measure of the eternal rest ; where we have found that life, that power, that manifestation of the eternal Spirit, and that redeeming virtue, which we never were before distinctly acquainted with ; I say, having tasted of this, having known this, having felt this, and come to a real enjoyment of it, in some degree, in our several measures ; we could not possibly conceal this treasure, but in



bowels of love, and in the movings of the life and power of the Spirit, have been drawn to testify of it to them who are left behind, grovelling under the burden of corruption, and crying out because of the sin and bondage from the powers of darkness, who have in a mist withheld their eyes from beholding that living virtue, which is able to save (and doth save, blessed be his name!) therefrom.

Now, this we have often found; That this our testimony hath not been received in the same Spirit and love wherein it hath gone forth; but the enemy by his subtlety hath raised up jealousies concerning us, and prejudices against us, as if we denied the Scriptures and ordinances of God, and that Christ that died at Jerusalem; professing him only in words, to win upon others by, but denying him in reality and substance.

To clear this latter, (for my heart is only at this present drawn out concerning that,) we have solemnly professed, in the sight of the Lord God, who hath given us the knowledge of his Son in life and power, these two things.

First, That we do really in our hearts own that Christ, who came in the fulness of time, in that prepared body, to do the Father's will, his coming into the world, doctrine, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, &c. in plainness and simplicity of heart, according as it is expressed in the letter of the Scriptures.

Secondly, That we own no other Christ than that, nor hold forth no other thing for Christ, but him who then appeared, and was made manifest in flesh.

Now, it would be nakedly inquired into by professors, what is the reason that their jealousies still

remain concerning us, and why they are still so ready to cast this upon us? Certainly, if they did know and own the same thing with us, in the Spirit, and in the power, in the life, and in the love, which is of the truth, this prejudice and these hard thoughts could not remain. But, if they themselves do not know Christ in the Spirit, but only according to a relation of the letter, no marvel though they miss both of the Spirit, and of the true intent and meaning of the letter; and likewise be liable to clash against the truth, as it is made manifest in others.

And indeed, the Lord hath shown me in Spirit several times, that they themselves are guilty of that very charge (and that he will so implead them at his judgment-seat) which they cast upon us, even of denying that Christ which died at Jerusalem to be the Christ. For, he that owneth the words of Scripture, as he apprehends or conceives them in the reasonings of his mind, and doth not wait to have them revealed in the Spirit, keeping out of his own reasonings and conceivings, and waiting patiently till the Lord open the thing in the Spirit, he setteth up his own conceivings, or an image in his mind, of the mind of the Spirit, but misseth of the thing itself, which alone is known in the Spirit, by them who wait upon the Spirit, there to receive it, and are not hasty to set up their own reasonings and imaginations concerning the thing in the mean time.

No man can in truth call Jesus the Lord, but by the Spirit. But, any man that is any thing serious, and weighs the Scriptures in the natural part, may so learn to acknowledge his coming into the world, and that he is Lord and King, &c. and may

thus call him Lord, yea, and kindle a great heat in his affections towards him; but all this, out of the life, out of the Spirit, is but man's image, which he forms in his mind, in his reading the Scriptures, and observing things therefrom. But the true calling Jesus Lord, is from the feeling of his eternal virtue in the Spirit, and finding the Scriptures opened to him by the Spirit, in a principle which is above the reason, comprehends the reason, and confounds and brings it to nothing.

Again; there is no true knowledge of Christ, no living knowledge, no saving knowledge, no knowledge which hath the eternal virtue in it; but that which is received and retained in a measure of light given by God to the creature, in the faith which is the gift, in the grace which is supernatural and spiritual; whereas the reasoning part is but natural. And such as have received the spiritual understanding, know it to be distinct from the natural; and we experimentally find a very clear distinction, between Scriptures searched out by the reasonings of the mind, (and so practices drawn therefrom,) and Scriptures opened by the Spirit, and felt in the life.

Now, that professors generally have not received their knowledge of Christ from the Spirit, or from Scriptures opened in the Spirit, (and so know not the thing, but only such a relation of the thing as man's reasoning part may drink in from the letter of the Scriptures,) is manifest by this, in that they are not able in spirit and understanding to distinguish the thing itself from the garment wherewith it was clothed, though the Scriptures be very express therein. Speak of Christ according to a relation of the letter, there they can say somewhat;

but come to the substance, come to the spirit of the thing, come to the thing itself, there they stutter and stammer, and show plainly that they know not what it is.

Now, the Scriptures do expressly distinguish between Christ and the garment which he wore; between him that came, and the body in which he came; between the substance which was veiled, and the veil which veiled it. "Lo! I come; a body hast thou prepared me." There is plainly he, and the body in which he came. There was the outward vessel, and the inward life. This we certainly know, and can never call the bodily garment Christ, but that which appeared and dwelt in the body. Now if ye indeed know the Christ of God, tell us plainly what that is which appeared in the body? Whether that was not the Christ before it took up the body, after it took up the body, and for ever?

And then, their confining of Christ to that body, plainly manifesteth that they want the knowledge of him in spirit. For Christ is the Son of the Father; he is the infinite eternal Being, One with the Father, and with the Spirit, and cannot be divided from either; cannot be anywhere where they are not, nor can be excluded from any place where they are. He may take up a body, and appear in it; but cannot be confined to be nowhere else but there; no, not at the very time while he is there. Christ, while he was here on earth, yet was not excluded from being in heaven with the Father at the very same time; as he himself said concerning himself, "The Son of man, which is in heaven," John, iii. 13. Nor was the Father excluded from being with him in the body; but the Father was in him, and he in the Father: where-

upon he said to Philip, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." What! did every one that saw that body, see the Father also? Nay, not so; but he that saw Christ, the Son of the living God, whom flesh and blood revealed not, but the Father only, (Mat. xvi. 16, 17,) he saw the Father also.

O friends! look to your knowledge of Christ, and to your faith and knowledge of the Scriptures, and to your prayers also; for it is easy missing of the living substance in all these, and meeting with a shadow; which may please and make a great show in the earthly part, in the natural understanding and affections, but satisfieth not the soul, or that which is born after the Spirit, but still the cry there goes out (where the soul is awakened) after truth, substance, life, virtue from God's Spirit in the spirit, which it alone can feed upon.

These four things following I am certain of; which he that cometh into the true light shall infallibly experience them there.

First, That nothing can save but the knowledge of Christ, even of that very Christ, and no other, who took upon him the prepared body, and offered it up at Jerusalem.

Secondly, That no knowledge of Christ can save but the living knowledge. Not a knowledge of him after the letter, which the carnal part may get much of, and value itself much by, but a knowledge of him in the Spirit; which is only given to that which is begotten and born of the Spirit, and only retained by that which abides and remains in the Spirit, and runs not out into the fleshly reasonings, imaginings, and conceivings, about the things mentioned in the Scriptures.

Thirdly, That that man who knoweth not Christ

in spirit, nor keepeth close to him in spirit ; but, through darkness and misguidance of the spirit of deceit, calleth the shinings of his light (his reproofs, his checks for that which is evil, and his secret motions to that which is good) natural ; this man, though he seem to own Christ ever so much according to the letter, yet in truth denies him.

Fourthly, He that denies Christ in his knockings and visitations of him in his own heart, and before men in the truths which he holds forth by his servants and ministers of his Spirit, him will he deny before his Father in heaven.

Oh ! I beseech you do not trifle about these things, for they are exceeding weighty, lest ye perish from the way ! For missing of the Saviour, ye must needs also miss of the salvation. Oh ! that ye knew your state, as God knows it to be, and as it is certainly known and felt, in the measure of his life and Holy Spirit, by those whom God hath gathered thither, and whose eyes he hath opened, and preserveth open there ; glory be to his name therefore ! *yea, glory, glory, glory, and everlasting praises be sung to him throughout all the holy land ; yea, in the very heights of Zion, by the souls of the redeemed, from henceforth and for evermore, Amen ! whose mercy, love, grace, wisdom, power, and rich goodness remaineth and endureth for ever ; by and in which the redeemed live to his praise, who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, whose blood they know what it is, and none else knoweth it, but they who feel the sprinkling and virtue of it. Lo ! this is our God, we have waited for him, and how can we but be glad, and rejoice in his salvation ! Oh ! let all that live by the breath of thy power, and drink of thy streams, sing praise unto thee, and exalt thy great and wonderful name for ever and ever !—Works, vol. iii. p. 58.*

*A FAITHFUL GUIDANCE to the Principle and Path of Truth, wherein eternal Life is witnessed, by those who are born thereof, and walk therein.*

THERE must be somewhat let down from God into a man's heart, to change his heart, and redeem it to God, or he cannot be saved. He must receive a seed, be born of a new and incorruptible seed, or he cannot be renewed from his corrupt nature and state. He must be born of water and God's Spirit, or he cannot enter into God's kingdom.

Now, this is the true religion; namely to experience and be subject to that power which redeems to God; which breaks the power of the wicked one in the heart, first casting him out, and then taking possession of the vessel, and filling it with the holy treasure.

*Quest.* But how may a man meet with such a thing as this?

*Ans.* The Scripture, which gives a faithful testimony concerning the truth, saith Christ, the Word of faith, which the apostles preached, is nigh. Inasmuch as a man need not say, Who shall go up or down to fetch it? But what saith it? "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." This is that which reconciles to God, cutting down and slaying the enmity by the power of the cross, and bringing up the seed. This is the adversary in the way of the sinner, which he that maketh peace with shall be remitted all his trespasses past, and find power and strength against sin for the time to come, as he is gathered into and brought forth in his pure life and nature.

*Q.* But how shall I know and receive this?

*A. That* in the heart which is contrary to sin, which discovereth sin, which witnesseth against sin, and is drawing the mind from it, furnishing those with a new and holy ability, who wait upon the Lord in it; *that that* is the thing, though in ever so little a seed or low measure. Now, he that minds this, hearkens to this, turns from what this in its pure unerring light shows to be evil, follows (in the will, strength, and ability which is of this) what this shows to be good; he receives it, and waiting upon it, and becoming daily subject to it shall grow up in it, increase in the knowledge of it and acquaintance with it, and receive of it daily more and more. And thus the man whose way was vile, whose heart was naught, formed in wickedness, filled with corruption, daily bringing forth sin and fruits unto death, shall find these, by the pure light and holy instructions of life, daily purged out of him, and Christ formed in him, and the holy fruits of righteousness brought forth through his vessel, by the power and Spirit of Christ, to the glory of God the Father.

And then, being in Christ, being in the principle of his life, and acting therein, here is peace in the soul, rest to it from its enemies and God's judgments, and acceptance with the Father in what the soul thus is and works.

But then, the world will persecute and hate exceedingly; because this soul, who thus submits to God, and is thus changed by him, is not of the world, but of the Father, which begat it in Christ, and formed it in his image and likeness.

Likewise, in this light, the eyes are opened to read the Scriptures, and to understand therein the conditions of the people and saints of the Most



High in former generations, and how the wicked spirit wrought then, to oppose the truth and people of God, and to draw men into deceit. Yea, and many other ways the Scriptures are exceeding sweet and useful, being read in that which gives the true sense and understanding of them.

But, let him that once putteth his hand to the plough, beginning to feel somewhat of God, and to subject unto it, and so to taste of the peace and pureness of it, never look back to the world, nor mind the temptations and oppositions he will meet with from that nature and spirit, either in himself or others; for, if he do, he will never be able to travel on, but rather consult with flesh and blood, and so return back into Egypt, and lose the crown which is laid up for those who pass on through the wilderness, through the trials, through the temptations, through the wants, through the various exercises to their journey's end.

This is the path of life in brief; happy is he who feels the guide into it, and faithfully follows him therein to the end.

There is another question springs up in my heart, which is this:

*Q.* How may a man come to have his sins washed away by the blood of Christ?

*A.* By coming into the light, and walking in the light, which discovers the blood, and wherein alone it is sprinkled by God, and felt by the soul, he may receive the cleansing which is by it. This is according to the testimony of Scripture, as 1 John, i. 7; "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." By the light the darkness is dis-

pelled, and in the light the corruption and filth is washed away by the blood, and the soul, mind, and conscience cleansed from it.

“This then is the message that we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,” ver. 5. What then? Why then, they that will know God, and walk with God, must by the virtue of his truth be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, (as Acts, xxvi. 18;) and in that light he shall meet with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and have fellowship with them, ver. 3, and shall be washed both with the water and with the blood, and kept clean and pure thereby in the sight of God.

*Q.* But how shall I come into the light, and how may I walk therein?

*A.* Christ is the light. He is the light of the world, the light of men, the light of life. And thou needest not say in thine heart, Who shall go up to heaven, or down into the deep for him? For he is near, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. This is the word of faith, which thou art to believe in, love, and obey; that in the love, faith, and obedience thereof, thine heart may be circumcised, and thou mayst live. This is the gospel of our salvation, even this Christ, this word, this light, this life, which redeems from sin, which destroyeth the destroyer, and setteth the soul free to serve and live to the Lord. This was the message the apostles had to deliver in their day, as Rom. x. 8. And this was Moses’s message, too, when he spake concerning the new covenant. For Moses did not only deliver the old covenant, but he also spake concerning the new, even another covenant than

that of Mount Horeb, Deut. xxix. 1. And the word of this other covenant was not the law written in tables of stone; but the word nigh in the mouth and heart, chap. xxx. 14.

*Object.* But that place speaks of doing, which is the voice of the old covenant, Do this and live; but the new covenant stands in believing.

*A.* The end of faith is obedience. Why do I believe Christ, but that I may receive the law of his Spirit, and walk before him in the newness of the obedience thereof? And he that obeys is of the faith, and in the truth; and he that obeys not, is out of it; is not in the power, not in the life, which brings forth the obedience; so, out of the thing which redeems, and in which the redemption is witnessed: but he that obeys, he that doth the will, he is in the righteousness, in the power, in the life, from which the obedience springs.

And here the washing and purifying of the soul is truly known and witnessed. Outward sacrifices under the law were vain, as to cleansing the soul; and an outward belief of what Christ did and suffered, effects not the thing now. What then? The new creature doth; the pure faith doth; the pure obedience doth. It did it formerly, it doth it still, and nothing else can do it. "Bring no more vain oblations; but wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well," &c. But how should this be? Could they ever attain this by the old covenant? Nay; but Moses had not only delivered them the old covenant, but also had directed them to the new, to the Word of faith, to the Word of life and power in the heart and mouth, through the obedience whereof they might

wash themselves, (as Peter, even in the gospel times, speaketh, 1 Pet. i. 22,) put away the evil of their doings; cease to do evil, learn to do well, &c. And what then? Why then, they should receive the cleansing through the blood of the Lamb; for then, though their sins were as scarlet, they should be as white as snow; though they were red like crimson, they should be as wool, Isa. i. 16, 17, 18.

So Micah tells them, when they asked how they might come before God to please him? "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God," Mic. vi. 8. Where or how doth God show this to man? Had not Moses told that before; to wit, by the Word nigh in the mouth and heart? There is somewhat near man, even in his mouth, which divides his words one from another, showing him at some times, and would do it oftener if he heeded it, which are bad words, and which are good words. What is that that doth this? The same thing also is in his heart, as a discernor of the thoughts and intents thereof, showing him when there is a good thought, desire, or intention in his mind, and when there is a bad or wicked one. What is this? Oh! that men knew what it is! Oh! that they could fear the Lord, and become subject to it, and they should know what it is!

Every man that will be sanctified, and inherit God's kingdom, must be born of the will of God. He must deny his own will, as Christ did; "Not my will," said he, "Father, but thine be done"—that must be crucified. He must suffer in the

flesh, die to the flesh, and live in and to the holy nature and Spirit of God.

Now, thus a man comes to be born of the pure will; to wit, by hearing the word nigh in the mouth and heart, and becoming subject to it. This cuts down his own will day by day, and brings up the will and nature of God in him, through which he is changed and sanctified, and becomes a new creature. For the old creature is made up of the old understanding and will; but the new creature is made up of the new.

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed according to thy word,” said David. What word was that? Was it the word of the old covenant, or the word nigh in the mouth and heart? And “Thy word,” saith he, “is a lantern to my feet, and a light to my path.” What word was that, the word of the first covenant, or the word of the second? “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” What law is that? “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” What testimony is that? “The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.” What statutes are they? Were not the statutes of the old covenant heavy and burdensome? “The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” What commandment is that? Yea, what is that which is “sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb,” which overcomes with sweetness? O that men could read! O that men could see the thing which is pure, and maketh pure; which is righteous, and maketh righteous! After men have seen the thing, there is a great way to travel to it; but how far are they off, who do not so much as see it, but are in the

darkness and prejudices of that nature and spirit which is contrary to it.

Now, if the Lord, in his tender mercy and love to thy soul, bring thee to a sense of this thing, and thou beginnest to feel this precious searching word discovering any evil to thee, either in thy heart or ways, oh! do not dispute, do not reason against it; but bless the discoverer, bow to the Son, become obedient immediately, faithfully following the Lamb therein, lest he remove his light from thee, and suffer darkness and the disputing wisdom to overtake thee,

Christ is not of the world, and he leads out of the world; out of its vanities, ways, customs, fashions, &c. A man cannot serve Christ and the world. Can any man be born of the Father, be begotten by him out of the spirit of the world, and yet live in that, walk in that, which is not of the Father, but of the world; which came from the worldly part, is of the worldly part, nourisheth and pleaseth the worldly part in man, but pleaseth not the Father? Can that man who is not of the world, but of the Father, do any thing that upholdeth the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, either in himself or others? Doth not the Spirit of the Lord, where it is hearkened to, draw out of these, and out of all things which are of these? Therefore, consider well what it will cost, and how hard it is to follow Christ; that thou who desirest to be the Lord's, mayst receive help and strength from him to be faithful, that in his strength thou mayst overcome all that stands between thee and life, that so thou mayst receive the crown, and inherit the kingdom which is prepared for and given to the faithful, who

labour and fight not in vain; but gain ground and conquer, yea, at length, become more than conquerors, through the mercy, love, might, and power of the Lord.—*From the same. Works, vol. iii. p. 72.*

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## ON THE TRUE CONFESSION OF CHRIST.

*Quest.* WHAT is the true confession of Christ, even that confession which ariseth from the knowledge which is life eternal?

*Ans.* Friends, I witness it to be this; A confession of his nature, a confession of his Spirit, a confession of his life, a confession of his power. To confess the present living appearance of Christ, that is to confess Christ. “Behold,” saith he, “I stand at the door and knock.” He that heareth his voice, acknowledgeth him, letteth him in, subjecteth to his truth and Holy Spirit; he confesseth him. But, though a man should acknowledge and confess all that is recorded in the Scriptures concerning him; yet if he know not his knocks, so as to let him in, and become subject to his power, he doth not confess Christ as he ought to do, and as God requireth of him. O that ye could learn thus to know Christ, and thus to confess him! For, until ye thus know him, ye cannot thus confess him; and your knees must first bow at his name, before your tongues can rightly confess him, to the glory of God the Father! For, if ye will indeed glorify the Father, ye must bow to the Son, who is the light wherein God dwells, in the shinings whereof he appears to and visits the sons of men. And as the Son himself is spiritual; so is the

light wherewith he visits dark man. His law is spiritual, able to convert the soul of any man in whose heart it is written, and to make wise the most simple among men unto salvation. For, the law of God writ in the heart is from the covenant of life; and delivers and preserves from the law of sin and death, having the light, power, and Spirit of Christ in and with it, from whom it comes.

Now, if ye will know these things clearly, certainly, and infallibly; wait to feel some touches, some drawings, some convictions of God's Spirit upon your hearts. And then, dispute not against them; but immediately become subject, so far as the light and drawings of the Father incline and lead the mind; and then, ye shall see what he is that draws, and of what nature his drawings are. And if once ye come to feel the preciousness of his ointment; and to partake of it, receiving it and following it, it will bring you to love and long after the name that anoints with the pure living oil.

Friends, I was once where ye now are; and in that day, I also, through error and mistake, called the light wherewith Christ hath enlightened man, *natural*, as ye now do. But the Lord hath since showed me, that it was not the true birth of life in me which so called it; and it is also manifested to me in his Spirit of truth, which deceives not, that it is not the true birth in you, which so judges of it. Oh! that ye were born of the Spirit, and in it knew the names of the things from their nature, and might be taught of the Father to worship in the Son! which ye can never do, till ye come into the Son's light; and that is the Son's light, even that wherewith he hath enlightened men, that they might believe in the Father through him!



The Scriptures, or any words spoken or written, are not the light itself, but testimonies concerning the light. Now, that which ye are to come into, and to dwell and abide in, is the light itself; which light was before any words that testify of it, and is the substance of all the shadows, and the end of all the testimonies concerning it. He is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the End of the new creation of God. O that ye so knew him!

[Christ is our life, and in the union with his Spirit, lies all our ability and strength; and that knowledge of Christ, which we witness to be life eternal, we did not meet with whilst we thought to have it in the Scriptures, but it hath been all along revealed to us by God's Spirit; so that we can truly say flesh and blood did not reveal the Son to us, but the Father. Yet, that which the Scriptures testify concerning Christ is exactly true according as it is there related, and is so acknowledged and really owned by us; though we obtained not our knowledge of Christ by the letter, but by receiving a principle of life from God; and coming into union with his Spirit, we came to the true knowledge and owning of the letter; which, as it came from the life, so can it only be rightly read and understood in the life from which it came: so that, he that is out of that, cannot but err concerning the letter, and misjudge concerning the things of God; whereas, he that is guided by and lives in God's Spirit, receiving his knowledge there, cannot err concerning the Spirit, or concerning the letter; but hath that within him, which gives to him, and preserves him in, the true sense and understanding of both.]

That from which the Scriptures came, is the

thing, the life, the Spirit, the power itself; which is able to write inwardly, as well as outwardly. And he that knows the thing, and is led to the thing by the inward writing, which is the testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of prophecy, he by the testimony of Jesus, by the Spirit of prophecy, is led to the Holy Power; which he believing in, it prevails to save him out of the contrary spirit and power. And this the Gentiles without the law, the Jews under the law, and the believers under grace, had spiritually, all one and the same way and path of life unto salvation; and God will be clear and just in judging them all according thereunto, who had all some manifestation of the gospel and power which saves, according to the dispensation of the good pleasure of the free Giver. And men's perishing in the time of every dispensation, is not for want of light and power from God, but from men's withdrawing and apostatizing from the light and power, which in every dispensation of life stretched forth its hand and arm sufficiently to gather and save.—*From a Piece addressed "To such as are not satisfied with a Profession."* 1668. *Works*, vol. iii. p. 84.

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#### CONCERNING APPLYING THE PROMISES.

THE promises of God are great and precious, and give to partake of the divine nature those that wait upon the Lord in the faith and obedience of his truth. Now, there are estates and conditions to which they do belong; and there are estates and

conditions to which they do not belong: and if any one apply any promise to himself, he not being in that estate and condition to which that promise belongs, he deceives his soul, and sucks not in the true sweetness and comfort of the promise, but of his own imaginary apprehensions concerning the promise.

There is a state of wounding, of judging, of God's pleading with the soul, because of sin and transgression. Now, he that breaks and wounds, he alone can bind up and heal; and the Lord is to be waited upon in the way of his judgments, until he see meet to bind up and heal. Now, the Lord heals by the same Spirit and power wherewith he wounds; but it is hard to lie under the judgment, to bear the indignation of the Lord, and to keep open the wound which he makes, till he pour in the oil and heal. For there is that near, which will be offering to heal before the season, and will be bringing in promises, and applying promises, otherwise than the Spirit of the Lord intendeth or applieth them. Now this is diligently to be watched against, that the hurt of the soul (judged and wounded by the Spirit of the Lord) be not healed slightly, and peace spoken to it, and an expectation and hope raised in it, which is not of the Lord. But, this is the right way, even to give up to feel that which wounds, and to receive the woundings of thy soul's friend, and lie low before him in the wounded state, waiting upon him in the way of his judgments and righteous indignation; till the same that wounded, speak peace. For, the same is to speak peace, and not another; "I the Lord wound, and I heal; I kill, and I make alive." Judgment is mine, and mercy is mine; and they

both issue from my lips. See also Isa. xii. 1. So every one, that would not be deceived about, nor misapply the promises, wait to feel that in you, which leads into the condition to which the promise belongs, and to be led into and kept in the condition by it. And then, the same that leads into the condition, will apply the promise to him who is in the condition, the ear being open to him, hearkening to the Lord, waiting what he will speak, who speaks peace to his people in his seasons; and having the ear shut against the voice of the unrighteous troubler of the souls of God's heritage. Yea, he that applieth the promises to the soul, having brought it into the state to which they belong, he also will lead and bring unto the fulfilling of the promises, even to the receiving of the good things promised and waited for; so that the soul shall witness the gospel to be a glorious state indeed; a state of life, a state of liberty, a state of power, a state of dominion, a state of holiness, a kingdom of righteousness and peace, wherein there are everlasting mansions and dwelling-places in Christ Jesus, for the seed of the righteous for evermore. The Lord God of everlasting mercy, life, power, and rich goodness, cause the light of his own Holy Spirit to shine into your hearts, guide you thereby into and in the true way, even in the pure living path, which was and is but one for ever, that ye may come into the true possession, and full enjoyment, and infallible witnessing of these things.—*From the same*, p. 90.

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*There is another Query, of great Concernment, which springeth up in my Heart towards you, [who are not satisfied with a Profession.]*

*Query.* Is not the Spirit, or anointing, the great gospel promise, and the great gospel ordinance? Is not he *Truth, and no lie*, and the leader out of all lies and deceits into the truth, and the preserver of the mind and spirit therein? “Little children,” said the same apostle, who had directed to the anointing, “keep yourselves from idols.” Is there any possibility of being kept from images and idols, but by him? Can any understand the things of the Spirit, or the words spoken by the Spirit concerning spiritual things, but by him? And then, is not every apprehension, that ye take up from the Scriptures concerning spiritual things, which ye have not from him, but comprehend and gather of yourselves, an image or conceiving of your own concerning that thing, and not that true knowledge and understanding of the thing which he alone can give? Oh! that all the chambers of imagery were thrown down in you, and every idol of the heart and mind discovered to you, and broken down by the light and power of the Lord; that ye might come to that which is pure and living, and by its purifying know the pure heart, the pure mind, the pure conscience, and offer up the pure perfect offering; not the lame, blind, imperfect, &c. which were not accepted in the figure under the law, nor acceptable under the gospel, Mal. i. 11, 13, and chap. iii. 3.

Friends, ye must know that which is pure from God, and ye must come into it, (out of that which

is impure, into that which is pure. Now, that ye may do so, ye must know the purifying; for nothing that is impure, can enter into that which is pure. Yea, ye must become priests to God, and wear the priest's garment, the pure garment, the living garment, the fine linen without mixture of the woollen. Ye must be born of the innocency, be clothed with the innocency. The stony, hard, desperately wicked heart must be taken away, and the tender heart of flesh received, the mind renewed to God, the fear put within, which cleanseth and keepeth clean, the law writ within, the Spirit of the Lord put in the inward parts, and felt powerfully operating and changing there. Yea, and the inside must not only be clean, but the outside also; for, ye must be clothed with the Spirit, clothed with the Lamb's righteousness and holiness; and thus ye must appear before the Lord in his temple, which is the beauty of holiness, whose house holiness becomes for ever; where ye are never to appear in your own filthy rags, but in the nature, Spirit, righteousness, and life of Christ. And thus ye are well-pleasing to God, even in that which is of God; being born of that, formed of that, found in that, appearing in that. But, in his own, no man can be accepted; for, it is determined of God and stands irreversible for ever, that in his own, in his own knowledge, in his own faith, in his own obedience, in his own righteousness, in his own willing and running, &c. shall no flesh for ever be justified in his sight; but only and alone in the nature, Spirit, life, righteousness, faith, obedience, and holiness of his Son. Therefore, wait for the seed, that ye may know the seed, feel the seed, the pure seed of life, the leaven of the heavenly king-

dom, and may witness it arising and come in you to do the will, and you in it quickened and enabled to live to and serve the living God. And when ye know this seed, ye know Christ; and when ye receive this seed, ye receive Christ; and if it live in you, Christ lives in you; and in it, being in it, and abiding in it, are ye heirs of the life, kingdom, and power, which hath no end; and shall daily feel the promises and blessings belonging to the seed, flowing in upon your spirits. But, if ye content yourselves with the knowledge of Christ, which the erring and apostatised spirit of man from the life and power may gather out of the letter of the Scriptures, and feed thereon; that will not nourish you up to eternal life, but death and sin and the gates of hell will have power over you notwithstanding that; but if ye, through the Spirit, receive power over that which is contrary to God, and through him mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Therefore, wait for the manifestation of the pure power of the endless life, which is now dispensed from on high, (blessed be the name of the living One!) and wait to know and be joined to that seed of life, wherein and whereby it is dispensed; that ye may witness Christ's kingdom come to you, and the reign of your spirits with him therein, over all that captivateth from him, loadeth the soul, boweth down and oppresseth.

*A Postscript, concerning Deceit, and being Deceived.*

THERE is that which deceives, where it is hearkened to; and there is that which is liable to be deceived by it. There is likewise that which deceiveth not;

and there is also that which cannot be deceived. So likewise, there is a pure fear and watching in the truth against the deceit, lest by any means it should enter and betray. As also, there is a fear that is a snare, which the true faith preserves out of, whereby many are entangled in the very bowels of deceit, even concerning those very things about which they are afraid they should be deceived. This hath been experienced by those, who have been acquainted with the Lord's precious truth, and thereby are come to know and discern the wiles and devices of Satan ; who often hath quenched what the Lord hath kindled, by his stirring up a fear, lest it should not be of the Lord, but from the spirit of deceit.

It is true, that in the apostasy from the life and Spirit of truth, deceit did generally prevail and overwhelm the minds of people. And so far as people are yet in the apostasy, not being gathered and redeemed out of it, by the Spirit and power of the Lord, they are yet under deceit ; though perhaps they little think so. Little did we think formerly, and little do they think now, who are now in that state we were then in, that while we so much feared being deceived, we were already deceived, being short of the life and power of truth, which alone is able to make free and preserve from deceit. When the Lord cometh to bring to the primitive light and principle, that he might perfectly deliver out of deceit ; what can the enemy do more advantageously towards keeping his hold in the mind, and towards keeping the mind in the deceits wherein he hath already entangled it, than to stir up and heighten a fear in it, lest the precious truth, which God maketh manifest to deliver



the soul by, should be deceit? And they that hearken to and let in the voice of the deceiver, must needs believe it to be so. And thus, with them light cometh to be called darkness, and darkness light. Yea, who is it, at this day, who escapeth this snare, of calling evil good, and good evil? Surely, none but he, whose soul is led into and lives in the light and power of truth.

For most men take up principles, according to their own, or other men's understanding of the Scriptures, and judge according to those principles; and so the Spirit and light of the Lord judgeth not in them, but they themselves judge according to an assumed knowledge. So that, flesh is not silent, the man is not dead in them and brought to nothing, but only lives in an higher region than he did before. Before, he lived in an apparent unrighteousness; now he lives in an imagined righteousness and faith; but not in the Son's righteousness, not in the Son's faith, not in the Son's power, not in the Son's dominion; but at best only in that which he apprehendeth and strongly imagineth to be so.

Oh! happy is he, who is come through all his own imaginings and conceivings about the things of God, and his own apprehensions about Scriptures and promises, and is come into the thing itself, into the Spirit of life, into the truth and into the power, and who walks with God therein, daily witnessing the redemption which is of him through his Son Jesus Christ, who is known and partook of in the pure quickening Spirit, and not otherwise. And he that is truly begotten of God, and dwells with him in the light which is eternal, knows that he is of God, which others may strongly imagine

they are, but none else can truly know it, but may easily err and be entangled in the deceits of the enemy, about the new birth, and other weighty things, while they are greatly afraid of being deceived by him; and so, through that fear, fly the pure truth, which frees from deceits, lest it should deceive them.—*From the same. Works, vol. iii. p. 92, &c.*

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A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF MY SOUL'S TRAVEL *towards the Holy Land, and how at length it pleased the Lord to join my heart to his pure, holy, living Truth; wherein I have witnessed the New Covenant, and peace with the Lord therein. With a few words concerning the way of knowing and receiving the Truth: which is not done by disputes and reasonings of the mind about it; but in waiting aright for the demonstration and power of God's Spirit to open the heart and understanding, and by submissive obedience to it, even in its lowest appearances in the inward parts.*

My heart from my childhood was pointed towards the Lord, whom I feared and longed after from my tender years; wherein I felt, that I could not be satisfied with, nor indeed seek after, the things of this perishing world, which naturally pass away; but I desired true sense of and unity with that which abideth for ever. There was somewhat indeed then still within me, even the seed of eternity, which leavened and balanced my spirit almost continually; but I knew it not distinctly, so as to

turn to it, and give up to it, entirely and understandingly. In this temper of mind, I earnestly sought after the Lord, applying myself to hear sermons, and read the best books I could meet with, but especially the Scriptures, which were very sweet and savoury to me; yea, I very earnestly desired and pressed after the knowledge of the Scriptures, but was much afraid of receiving men's interpretations of them, or of fastening any interpretation upon them myself; but waited much and prayed much, that from the Spirit of the Lord I might receive the true understanding of them, and that he would chiefly endue me with that knowledge, which I might feel sanctifying and saving. And indeed, I did sensibly receive of his love, of his mercy, and of his grace, which I felt still freely to move towards me, and at seasons when I was most filled with the sense of my own unworthiness, and had least expectations of the manifestations of them.

But I was exceedingly entangled about election and reprobation, having drunk in that doctrine, according as it was then held forth by the strictest of those that were termed Puritans, and as then seemed to be very manifest and positive from Rom. ix. &c.; fearing lest, notwithstanding all my desires and seekings after the Lord, he might in his decree have passed me by; and I felt it would be bitter to me to bear his wrath, and be separated from his love for evermore; yet, if he had so decreed, it would be, and I should, notwithstanding these fair beginnings and hopes, fall away and perish at the last. In this great trouble and grief, (which was much added to by not finding the Spirit of God so in me and with me, as I

had read and believed the former Christians had it,) and in mourning over and grappling with secret corruptions and temptations, I spent many years, and fell into great weakness of body ; and often casting myself upon my bed, did wring my hands and weep bitterly, begging earnestly of the Lord, daily, that I might be pitied by him, and helped against my enemies, and be made conformable to the image of his Son, by his own renewing power. And indeed, at last, when my nature was almost spent, and the pit of despair was even closing its mouth upon me, mercy sprang, and deliverance came, and the Lord my God owned me, and sealed his love unto me, and light sprang within me, which made not only the Scriptures, but the very outward creatures glorious in my eye ; so that every thing was sweet and pleasant and lightsome round about me. But I soon felt, that this estate was too high and glorious for me, and I was not able to abide in it, it so overcame my natural spirits ; wherefore, blessing the name of the Lord for his great goodness to me, I prayed unto him to take that from me which I was not able to bear, and to give me such a proportion of his light and presence, as was suitable to my present state, and might fit me for his service. Whereupon, this was presently removed from me ; yet a savour remained with me, wherein I had sweetness, and comfort, and refreshment for a long season.

But, my mind did not then know how to turn to and dwell with that which gave me the savour, nor rightly to read what God did daily write in my heart, which sufficiently manifested itself to be of him, by its living virtue and pure operation upon me ; but I looked upon the Scriptures to be my

rule, and so would weigh the inward appearances of God to me by what was outwardly written, and durst not receive any thing from God immediately, as it sprang from the fountain, but only in that mediate way. Herein, did I limit the Holy One of Israel, and exceedingly hurt my own soul, as I afterwards felt and came to understand. Yet the Lord was tender to me, and condescended exceedingly, opening Scriptures to me, freshly every day, teaching and instructing, warming and comforting my heart thereby; and truly he did help me to pray, and to believe, and to love him and his appearances in any; yea, to love all the sons of men and all his creatures with a true love. But, *that* in me, which knew not the appearances of the Lord in my spirit, but would limit him to words of Scriptures formerly written, *that* proceeded yet further, and would be raising a fabric of knowledge out of the Scriptures, and gathering a perfect rule (as I thought) concerning my heart, my words, my ways, my worship; and according to what I thus drank in after this manner from the Scriptures, I practised, and with much seriousness of spirit and prayer to God fell a helping to build up an Independent congregation, wherein the savour of life and the presence of God was fresh with me, as I believe there are yet some alive of that congregation can testify.

This was my state, when I was smitten, broken, and distressed by the Lord, confounded in my worship, confounded in my knowledge, stripped of all in one day, which it is hard to utter, and was matter of amazement to all that beheld me. I lay open and naked to all that would inquire of me, and strive to search out what might be the cause

the Lord should deal so with me. They would at first be jealous that I had sinned and provoked him so to do; but when they had scanned things thoroughly, and I had opened my heart nakedly to them, I do not remember any one that ever retained that sense concerning me. My soul remembereth the wormwood and gall, the exceeding bitterness of that state, and is still humbled in me in the remembrance of it before the Lord. Oh! how did I wish with Job, that I might come before him, and bowingly plead with him; for indeed, I had no sense of any guilt upon me, but was sick of love towards him, and as one violently rent from the bosom of his Beloved! O how gladly would I have met with death! For, I was weary all the day long, and afraid of the night, and weary also of the night-season, and afraid of the ensuing day. I remember my grievous and bitter mournings to the Lord: how often did I say, *O Lord, why hast thou forsaken me? Why hast thou broken me to pieces? I had no delight but thee, no desire after any but thee. My heart was bent wholly to serve thee, and thou hast even fitted me* (as appeared to my sense) *by many deep exercises and experiences for thy service; why dost thou make me thus miserable?* Sometimes I would cast mine eye upon a Scripture, and my heart would even melt within me; at other times I would desire to pray to my God, as I had formerly done; but I found I knew him not, and I could not tell how to pray, or in any wise to come near him, as I had formerly done. In this condition I wandered up and down from mountain to hill, from one sort to another, with a cry in my spirit, *Can ye tell news of my Beloved? Where doth he dwell? Where doth he appear?* But their voices

were still strange to me, and I should retire sad and oppressed, and bowed down in spirit, from them.

Now, surely, all serious, sober sensible people, will be ready to inquire, how I came satisfyingly to know the Lord at length; or whether I do yet certainly know him, and am yet truly satisfied?

Yes indeed, I am satisfied at my very heart. Truly my heart is united to him whom I longed after, in an everlasting covenant of pure life and peace.

Well then, how came this about? will some say.

Why thus. The Lord opened my spirit, the Lord gave me the certain and sensible feeling of the pure seed, which had been with me from the beginning; the Lord caused his holy power to fall upon me, and gave me such an inward demonstration and feeling of the seed of life, that I cried out in my spirit, *This is he, this is he; there is not another, there never was another. He was always near me, though I knew him not* (not so sensibly, not so distinctly, as now he was revealed in me and to me by the Father;) *O that I might now be joined to him, and he alone might live in me!* And so, in the willingness which God had wrought in me, in this day of his power to my soul, I gave up to be instructed, exercised, and led by him, in the waiting for and feeling of his holy seed, that all might be wrought out of me which could not live with the seed, but would be hindering the dwelling and reigning of the seed in me, while it remained and had power. And so, I have gone through a sore travail, and fight of afflictions and temptations of many kinds; wherein the Lord hath been merciful to me in helping me, and preserving the spark of

life in me, in the midst of many things which had befallen me, whose nature tended to quench and extinguish it.

Now, thus having met with the true way, and walked with the Lord therein, wherein daily certainty, yea, and full assurance of faith and of understanding is at length obtained; I cannot be silent (true love and pure life stirring in me and moving me,) but am necessitated to testify of it to others; and this is it, To retire inwardly, and wait to feel somewhat of the Lord, somewhat of his Holy Spirit and power, discovering and drawing from that which is contrary to him, and into his holy nature and heavenly image. And then, as the mind is joined to this, somewhat is received, some true life, some true light, some true discerning; which the creature not exceeding, but abiding in the measure of, is safe; but it is easy erring from this, but hard abiding with it, and not going before its leadings. Yet he that feels life, and begins in life, doth he not begin safely? And he that waits, and fears, and goes on no further than his Captain goes before him, doth he not proceed safely? Yea, very safely, even till he cometh to be so settled and established in the virtue, demonstration, and power of truth, as nothing can prevail to shake him. Now, blessed be the Lord! there are many at this day, who can truly and faithfully witness, that they have been brought by the Lord to this state. And thus have we learned of the Lord; to wit, not by the high, striving, aspiring mind; but by lying low, and being contented with a little. If but a crumb of bread, (yet if bread) if but a drop of water, (yet if water) we have been contented with it, and also thankful to



the Lord for it; nor by thoughtfulness and wise searching and deep considering with our own wisdom and reason have we obtained it; but in the still, meek, and humble waiting, have we found that brought into the death, which is not to know the mysteries of God's kingdom, and that which is to live, made alive and increase in life.

Therefore, he that would truly know the Lord, let him take heed of his own reason and understanding. I tried this way very far; for I considered most seriously and uprightly; I prayed, I read the Scriptures, I earnestly desired to understand and find out whether that, which this people, called QUAKERS, testified of, was the only way and truth of God (as they seemed to me but to pretend;) but, for all this, prejudices multiplied upon me, and strong reasonings against them, which appeared to me as unanswerable. But when the Lord revealed his seed in me, and touched my heart therewith, which administered true life and virtue to me, I presently felt them there the children of the Most High, and so grown up in his life, power, and holy dominion, (as the inward eye, being opened by the Lord sees,) as drew forth from me great reverence of heart and praises to the Lord, who had so appeared among men in these latter days. And as God draweth, in any respect, O give up in faithfulness to him! Despise the shame, take up the cross; for indeed it is a way which is very cross to man, and which his wisdom will exceedingly be ashamed of; but that must be denied and turned from, and the secret sensible drawings of God's Spirit waited for and given up to. Mind people: He that will come into the new covenant, must come into the obedience of it.

The light of life, which God hath hid in the heart, is the covenant; and from this covenant God doth not give knowledge to satisfy the vast, aspiring, comprehending wisdom of man; but living knowledge, to feed that which is quickened by him; which knowledge is given in the obedience, and is very sweet and precious to the state of him that knows how to feed upon it. Yea, truly, this is of a very excellent, pure, precious nature, and a little of it weighs down that great vast knowledge in the comprehending part, which the man's spirit and nature so much prizeth and presseth after. And truly, friends, I witness at this day a great difference between the sweetness of comprehending the knowledge of things, as expressed in the Scriptures, (this I fed much on formerly,) and tasting the hidden life, the hidden manna in the heart, which is my food now, blessed for ever be the Lord my God and Saviour! Oh! that others had a true, certain, and sensible taste of the life, virtue, and goodness of the Lord, as it is revealed there! Surely, it could not but kindle the true hunger, and inflame the true thirst; which can never be satisfied but by the true bread, and by water from the living fountain. This, the Lord, in the tenderness of his love, and in the riches of his grace and mercy, hath brought us to; and this we earnestly and uprightly desire and endeavour, that others may be brought to also; that they may rightly, in the true silence of the flesh, and in the pure stillness of spirit, wait for, and in the Lord's due time receive that, which answers the desire of the awakened mind and soul, and satisfies it with the true precious substance for evermore, *Amen.*—1668. *Works*, vol. iii. p. 97.

OF CERTAINTY AND RIGHTLY-GROUNDED ASSU-  
RANCE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

**THERE** is a witness of and from God in every conscience; which, in his light, power, and authority, witnesseth for him, and against that which is contrary to him, as he pleaseth to move upon it, visiting and drawing the hearts of the sons of men by it.

From this witness proceeds the true and well-grounded religion in the mind towards God: for this witness both testifieth and demonstrateth that there is a God, and also inclineth the mind to desire and seek after the right knowledge and true worship of him.

And such who keep to this witness, and wait upon God therein, are taught by it the true spiritual worship; the true and pure fear of the Most High; the faith which he giveth to his saints; the love which is chaste and unfeigned; the hope which purifieth the mind, and anchors it on the eternal rock; the meekness, patience, gentleness, humility, &c. which is not of man's nature, but the gift of God, and the nature of the heavenly Giver.

And then for exercises of religion, as praying to the Father of spirits, hearing the heavenly voice, reading in the Spirit, and with the renewed understanding, singing and making melody in the heart, and also with the voice, to the Lord, as his life is felt, and the spiritual blessings and treasure received;—all these, and whatever else is judged necessary for the soul, are taught by this witness of God in the conscience, as the soul groweth up in the light, spirit, nature, and holy power thereof.

But now, when the Lord reacheth to his witness in men, and is teaching their hearts by it, then the enemy, the other spirit, whose seat is in the other part, keepeth a noise there, to overbear the voice of the witness, and to make men take up religion in another part, which is shallow, and reacheth not to the depth and weight of truth, which is in the witness of God, and which the witness of God gives to them that come thither.

Thus the enemy stirreth up reasonings, imaginations, and consultations about God and his worship; wherein he raised up the vain shallow mind, forging and bringing forth somewhat pleasing and suitable to the earthly understanding; taking up the mind therewith, and engaging the heart in some such practices therefrom, as may quiet and satisfy that part in men. For the ways that men take up in their reasonings and understandings, satisfy their reasonings and understandings; and so they walk in the light of the sparks, and warm themselves by the fire of their own kindling; but all this answers not the witness of God in them, nor will be approved by his light in their own consciences, when it comes again to be revealed and made manifest in them.

This was the ground of the error both of the Jews and Gentiles.

The Gentiles were enlightened by God with his true light; what might be known of God, suitable to their state and capacity, being manifested in them; insomuch as it is witnessed concerning them in the Scriptures (which are a true record and testimony) that they knew God. But when they knew him, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and so

their foolish heart was darkened concerning him : and they worshipped him not as the witness taught them he was to be worshipped, not according to the manifestation of his light in them, but according to their own foolish imaginations and reasonings, which taught them to make images of him, and so to worship him in and through creatures, according to their own inventions ; which is not the true worship, Rom. i. 21, 22, 23.

So likewise the Jews, not keeping to the manifestation of his light within them, (to the word or commandment nigh in the mouth and heart, to which Moses directed them,) which would have taught and enabled them to have kept to the law of the letter without them ; they also ran into the nature and spirit of the heathen, and fell into imaginings and reasonings, which led them to worship like them ; insomuch that they also changed their glory into the image of an ox that eateth grass, Psalm cvi. 20.

Now, from this part in man ariseth all the uncertainty, and doubts, and dissatisfaction about religion. And hence arise the opinions, and judgments, and reasonings, in the minds of men : yea, indeed, the best of men's religion here is but an opinion or judgment, which the breath of God's Spirit will shake and dissolve everywhere, sooner or later. All flesh is grass ; and all the beauty of men's knowledge, religion, and worship here, will wither like grass. All the buildings and churches that are raised here, how beautiful soever, are but Babylon, built by man's understanding, by man's knowledge, by man's comprehension, by man's wisdom, by man's skill, and indeed in man's will and time, and their standing, beauty, strength, and

glory, is but from man, and in man's day, and will fade away like a flower.

But the true certainty is in the day of God, from the light of his Spirit shining into man's spirit, from God's inward reaching to his heart by his power, and testifying his truth there. And this, all the powers of darkness cannot prevail against in itself; no, nor against that man that is kept to it. For it is the rock, the only rock, upon which the whole church is built, and which cannot fail to preserve every member of the church which is built upon it,

Ye then, which would come to certainty in religion, observe the way which is made manifest from God in this our day, blessed be his name! which is this: mind the witness of God in thy heart, and come to and build upon the light thereof. Dwell not in reasonings; take not up thy religion in reasonings of the mind; but pass through them, pass beyond them, into a light of an higher nature. Wait to know the birth which is from God, and the light which he gives to that birth. What is the birth? Is not the birth of and from the second Adam? And what is the heavenly birth's light? Is it not the light of the second Adam? Is it not in nature and kind above the light of the first Adam? Where is the seat of reasonings? Is it not the earthly mind, the fallen mind? Here lies man's strength; here is man's wisdom; here is man's life. It is so indeed; but the wisdom of Christ, the light of Christ, the life of Christ, the power of Christ, is a cross to this; finds it in the enmity against God, crucifies it, slays it, brings it to nothing; and he that will become wise as to God, must become a fool unto

all this, a child, a babe, entering the kingdom without this, and must there remain naked as to this, and never put it on more.

Our religion stands in a principle which changeth the mind, wherein the Spirit of life appeareth to, and witnesseth in the conscience to and concerning the things of the kingdom; where we hear the voice, and see the express image of the Invisible One, and know things, not from an outward relation, but from their inward nature, virtue, and power. Yea, here (we must profess) we so know things, that we are fully satisfied about them, and could not doubt concerning them, though there never had been word or letter written of them; though indeed it is also a great comfort and sweet refreshment to us, to read that testified of outwardly, which (through the tender mercy of our God) we feel and enjoy inwardly. And in this our whole religion consists; to wit, in the silence and death of the flesh, and in the quickening and flowing life of the Spirit. For, he who is of the new birth, of the new creation, of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, is as really alive to God, and as really lives to him in his Spirit, as ever he was really dead in trespasses and sins in the time of his alienation and estrangement from God.—*From "Some things relating to Religion," &c. 1668. Works, vol. iii. p. 109.*

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A VISIT OF TENDER AND UPRIGHT LOVE *to such as, among the many Professions and Ways of Religion, retain any Measure of Sincerity of Heart, and true Desires after the LORD.*

THE main thing in religion is to receive a principle of life from God, whereby the mind may be changed, and the heart made able to understand the mysteries of his kingdom, and to see and walk in the way of life; and this is the travail of the souls of the righteous, that they may abide, grow up, and walk with the Lord in this principle; and that others also, who breathe after him, may be gathered into, and feel the virtue of the same principle.

But there is one that stands in the way to hinder this work of the Lord, who with great subtlety strives to keep souls in captivity, and to prejudice them against the precious living appearances of the redeeming power of the Lord.

One great way whereby he doth this is, by raising up in them a fear lest they should be deceived and betrayed, and instead of obtaining more, lose that little of God which they have. With this was I exercised long; and still, when life stirred in my heart, then this fear was raised in me; so that I durst not in judgment close with what secretly in spirit I felt to be of God, it having a true touch of his quickening, warming, convincing, enlivening virtue in it.

Now, that this snare may be escaped by such as breathe after the Lord, oh! let them wait, mourn, and cry to him, that he would write his pure fear in their hearts, and teach them when to fear, and



how to fear, and what to fear; and in that (or as that is brought forth in them) they shall see, that they have more cause to fear their present state, than to fear that which, in the quickening warmth and virtue of God, comes to make a change in their present state: yea, they shall then see how the enemy now causeth them to fear, where no fear is; and keepeth them from fearing, where the fear is. For what is the ground of fear now? This is the great thing that they should fear, lest they should not hear the call of the Spirit of the Lord out of Babylon; out of that part of Babylon out of which they have not yet travelled; and lest they should not hear and mind the call of his Spirit unto Zion, the holy mount of God, towards and unto which he leadeth his people, in this day of the revelation and manifestation of his glorious love and power.

Oh! therefore, my friends, ye that long after the Lord, ye that desire to feel the power of his truth, wait for the principle of life from him to be revealed in you, and the pure fear which is therefrom, that ye may feel the Lord thereby, and therein (even in and through that principle) writing his fear, his pure fear, his holy fear, his powerfully-preserving fear, in your hearts; that ye may know the way to him, the seed, (which is the way,) may come and join to him therein, and never depart from him. The fear of the Lord, from the principle of his life, will without fail effect this in you, as ye receive it from the Lord; but the other fear, the fear which the enemy begets, will not do it; but will be a bar and sore stop in your way, till the Lord by his holy power, through his tender mercy, remove it from you.

And now, answer me one question uprightly, as in God's sight, from whom it is in my heart to propound it to you.

Are you come to Zion, or are ye travelling thitherward rightly and truly? Have ye ever known any of the travellers, that ye have been acquainted with, that could in truth say, that they were come to Zion? The Christians, in the primitive times, were come to Zion, and they were acquainted and dwelt with God and Christ there; and knew Jerusalem, the heavenly building, the city of the living God. Oh! where are ye? Nay, are ye yet come out of Babylon? Do ye yet know the wilderness, the intricate passages therein, wherethrough God alone can lead the soul? Oh! depart ye, depart ye from your present stations, in the leadings of God's Spirit; unless ye can say, in the true unerring light, that they are your rest, your soul's true rest, even the everlasting kingdom, which the primitive Christians received, and into which they found entrance, which could not be shaken.

And, friends, let me tell you one thing further, (for my heart is at this present opened to you by the Lord,) that as the soul in its travels comes to Zion, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is witnessed, which makes free from the law of sin and death. And then, there is no more such a crying out of the body of sin as there was before; but a blessing of him who hath delivered, and daily doth deliver, from it: yea, the body of sin is known and felt to be put off, and Christ put on in the stead thereof. For, my friends, there are several states witnessed by the soul, in its true and sensible travels towards the holy land. As for instance:

1. There is a state of Egyptian darkness and bondage, in which the power of death reigns and rules in the heart, subjecting it to sin and death. And here, the soul is in the grave, and under death, captivity, and bondage, in the midst of all its professions of religion, and talk of God and Christ, and reading Scriptures, and observing ordinances and duties, &c.

2. There is a wilderness state, wherein the strength of captivity is somewhat broken, and the heart drawn to mind the leadings of life, and to follow after the Lord through the trials, through the preparations, through the several exercises which the Lord seeth good to exercise it with.

And here, the mercy and goodness of the Lord is experienced, and the deceitfulness and treachery of the heart. This is the place of humiliation and breaking, wherein the soul daily feels how unto-ward and unaccustomed it is to the yoke, which should break the spirit, and subdue it to God. Here, the Lord shows the soul what its heart is, that he might humble it, and do it good in the latter end. Here the very law of God appears weak, through the strength of the flesh, which is not yet subdued. Now here, is mourning, and groaning, and crying to the Lord night and day; both because of the violence and multitude of the enemies, and because of the naughtiness, distrust, and unbelief of the heart.

3. There is a state of rest, a state of peace, a state of life, a state of power, a state of grace, a state of dominion, in the life, and through the power of the Lord, wherein the law of life is manifested in dominion in the heart over the law of sin and death. There is an everlasting kingdom,

wherein God and Christ reign, in which God treads Satan down under the feet of the soul, and makes the soul a king and a priest in the Son of his love; and the soul feels it is one with and accepted in the beloved.

Now, friends, that ye may know this kingdom, travel faithfully towards it; feel and come into the reign of Christ in it; sit down in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and inherit substance; know the gathering to Christ in the name, and sit down in the name, where the enemy cannot touch you; but feel the preservation and powerful life and dominion of that seed which is over the enemy, and wherein and whereby the Lord scatters the enemy, bruising the serpent's head, and anointing the soul with the oil of gladness, and clothing it with the beautiful garments of his righteousness and salvation; and that ye may know the precious and glorious building of life in the Spirit, even of the holy house and city of God, where the walls are salvation, and the gates praise. For this end, it is in my heart from the Lord to write these things unto you; and the Lord God of his mercy open the door of entrance to you into these things; for there is but one door of life, and there is not another; which door is Christ the seed; which seed is revealed within, there to break the wisdom, strength, and head of the serpent; and so far as he breaks it there, redemption and freedom is witnessed from it, and no further.

Oh! that ye might receive an understanding from the Lord, and be taught by him to deny and part with the understanding which is not of him, that ye might see things from him, and in his light, which ye have not yet seen; and consider

aright of that, which the enemy hitherto, by his subtlety, hath prejudiced you against.

And now, as for us, who experience the truth as it is in Jesus, and with the Lord our God in his light, and by virtue of his life and love shed abroad in our hearts; I say, what is it to us to be judged by you in your day as persons that deny Christ, deny Scriptures, deny ordinances, deny duties, &c.? We are satisfied in our hearts as touching your judgment, knowing from the Lord what it is in you that thus judgeth of us, even the same thing that judged amiss of Christ, in the Scribes, Pharisees, and professing Jews, in the days of his flesh. And indeed, that in you can never judge aright; but is to be judged, condemned, and destroyed by the life and power of the Lord.

And oh! that ye knew, sensibly knew, what is to live, and what is to die in you, that ye might feel the rising of your souls out of the grave, through the immortal seed of God, and the bringing of all your wisdom and knowledge of the things of God into death which ye hold and make use of, out of the compass and limits of his holy life and covenant.

For, friends, let me tell you, that which hath been parted with for the kingdom's sake, and the righteousness thereof, in some, was more precious than what ye hold so stiffly, and so magnify in your own thoughts and reasonings against the truth. Yea, that which was once of high esteem, and very glorious in our eyes, is now become as dross and dung, for the excellency of the pure living knowledge of and fellowship with Jesus Christ, our Lord; and if ye had the true measure and balance to weigh things in, ye would acknowledge it: but

the letter, and literal ordinances, and duties, and apprehensions of things out of the life, kills you, and keeps you under the veil, and from the sight of the things which are within the veil.

O that God would rend the veil in you ! O that God would give you the feeling of and union with that, whereby he rends the veil ! O that he would humble you, and bring down the mighty from his seat of judgment in you, to be judged and abased, and exalt the meek and lowly into that which is his proper place !

O that ye might feel the work of God, even the redemption of the soul, begun and carried on by him with power in your hearts ! Then would ye know Christ indeed, the Scriptures indeed, the ordinances indeed, the duties indeed, the everlasting sabbath, the everlasting worship ; even the substance of all that was shadowed out under the law, and sit down under the wing of the Almighty, from whence the power, the life, the virtue, the healing, drops into the soul.

And now, to give a little touch at those things before mentioned, which ye so stumble at, a little to help to remove them from your spirits, if it please the Lord.

1. We do not deny that Christ which died at Jerusalem ; but own him, and no other ; and own what he did, his obedience to the Father always, and in all things ; his sufferings in the virtue and power of the Father, and the value of them with the Father. This the Lord our God teacheth us to own, and to bless the name of the Lord, for him who is the Captain, and worker out of our salvation ; a measure of whose life and power we have received, and embrace in our hearts ; and in this,

is He, the fulness, made manifest to us ; and we, through this, and by this, and in this, ingrafted into him ; and so come to partake of the sweetness and fatness of the olive-tree. Yea, this we certainly know, that Christ was not only made manifest in that body of flesh, but is also made manifest in our mortal flesh, as we are gathered into his life, and his life brought forth in us. And he is not only antichrist, that denieth Christ's appearance in that body of flesh ; but he that denieth him, the hope of glory, in his saints, his spiritual body. Yea, I beseech you consider, whether it hath been the work of antichrist all along the apostasy, to deny the appearance of Christ in that body of flesh, or to deny the appearance of his life and Spirit in the flesh of his saints ? " We know (saith the apostle John) that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true." How was he come ? Was not he that was with them come in them ? Did he not live in them, act in them, speak in them ? And did not they that were of God hear the voice of Christ, the voice of the Shepherd in them ? But, they which were not of God, which were not the sheep, could not hear the voice of Christ in his apostles and believers ; could not own him come in their flesh, though they could preach the same Christ in words, and own his coming in that body of flesh which he had appeared in, 1 John, iv. 6.

2. We do indeed really, heartily, singly, as in God's sight, own the Scriptures ; the Scriptures written by the prophets and holy men of God under the law ; the Scriptures written by the evangelists and apostles in the time of the gospel ; and we read them with delight and joy, and would draw

no man from a right reading of them to the benefit of his soul; but only from giving their own judgments on them without the Spirit of God; lest, in so doing, they wrest them to their own destruction.

This is that which the Lord hath drawn us from, and which we know it would also be profitable to others to be drawn from too; to wit, from imagining and guessing at the meaning of Scriptures, and interpreting them without the opening of that Spirit from which they were given forth; for they who so do, feed that part with a gathered knowledge, which should be famished, die, and perish, that another thing might come to live in them, and they in it.

Now to us, being taught of God, and led by him into the things and through the conditions the Scriptures speak of, the Scriptures are very precious, the relation of things under the law precious, the instructions, promises, and comforts precious, yea, the very reproofs and denunciations of judgment to that part, nature, and spirit which the judgments are to, precious; and it is impossible for any heart to conceive, who hath not the experience of the thing, how life springs in us; and how sweet, pleasant, and profitable the words of life in the writings of the holy men of God are to our spirits; and in reading them, we often meet with refreshment, comfort, hope, and joy, from the working of the same Spirit in us, which gave forth the good words through them.

3. As touching ordinances, we own all the ordinances and appointments of God to the Jews under the law, and God's presence with them, walking with the Lord, and worshipping him in the faith



according thereto. Yea, what if I should say, that we know and are exercised in the same worship in Spirit towards the Lord our God, who hath called and taught us to worship him in spirit and truth, so as he taught them, according to the shadow and letter? What if I should say, that we worship the Lord in Spirit on the Lord's day, which is inward and spiritual, the true rest, the substantial sabbath, and that we offer up to him the living sacrifices, which the High Priest of our profession prepares in us for the most excellent majesty and glory of our God therein? Were not the sacrifices under the law, which they offered up according to the letter, types and shadows of what the Lord teacheth us, and giveth us to offer up to him in spirit, when we appear before him in his house built on his holy mountain? For, friends, the house wherein we appear is spiritual, an house of God's own building; the worship spiritual, the sacrifices spiritual, the day of worship spiritual, even the day which the Lord hath made. And here, we know and enjoy the things shadowed out under the law spiritually, eating that which is meat indeed, and drinking that which is drink indeed, even the flesh and blood of the Son of man; in which we feel and partake of his nature, his virtue, his life, his substance, and both take it in into us, and put it upon us; so that we have Christ both to be our food and clothing; and in the birth, nature, and Spirit which is of him, cannot be deceived concerning him.

But the great matter ye seem to have against us as to ordinances, is about the baptism of water, and breaking outward bread, and drinking outward wine; concerning which I have two or three weighty queries to propound to be seriously considered of.

*Query 1.* Were these things themselves the things of the kingdom or significations of somewhat relating to the kingdom, as the shadows under the law were? And so, though they might have a use and service in the passage from the law, yet could they have an absolute place in the day? For as the day dawns and breaks, the shadows fly away. What should the shadow do, when that which the shadow signified is come? What place is there for shadows in the substance, in the everlasting kingdom?

Now, though the apostle condescended so as to circumcise for the sake of the Jews, yet circumcision was not to abide. So he condescended also as to John's baptism, to wit, the baptism of water; for that was not Christ's baptism, but his baptism was that of the Holy Ghost and fire; yet he blessed God he did not make use of it, and said, *he was not sent to baptize*. What was he not sent to baptize with? Why not with water, not with John's baptism; but he was sent to baptize with Christ's baptism; to baptize into the name, into the Spirit, into the power, and so were all the apostles, as well as to preach the gospel, Gal. iii. 5. Matt. xxviii. 19.

Then, for the outward supper: was not that a shadow of the true substantial supper of the Lord, of the breaking of the true bread, and drinking of the true wine, the fruit of the vine of life, in the kingdom of God? Which kingdom was at hand in John's time, and the disciples of Christ were to pray it might come; and the apostles, and they afterwards, that were in the power, in the life, in the righteousness, in the joy eternal, did witness it come. For, mark: the promise was not only of a

kingdom of glory hereafter, when the body is laid down; but they were to receive the kingdom, and feel an entrance, yea, an abundant entrance, into the everlasting kingdom ministered to them, even then: and they were to eat bread in the kingdom, and drink wine in the kingdom, even new bread, and new wine, fresh from the table of the Lord, yea, and with the Lord, in his presence, according to the promise, *he would come and dwell in them, and walk in them, and sup with them, and they with him.* And thus they in their day, and we in our day, (blessed be the name of the Lord our God!) eat and drink of the heavenly bread and wine of the kingdom with Christ therein; every one sitting in the heavenly place, and mansion of rest, which the Lord hath built up and prepared for him.

Q. 2. Have not these outward things been much abused, and the antichristian spirit, even the spirit which hath adulterated from the life and power of God, appeared in them, and cried them up? And surely, as so cried up by that spirit, they are neither of nor for Christ.

And consider well, what that outward court was which God gave to the Gentiles, and what the worship and ordinances of the outward court were; and whether they were not given to the Gentiles also, and whether these are any part of them; for if so, then they belong not to, nor are required by the Lord, of the inward Jews, who are of the circumcision in the heart, and are come to inherit the substance.

Q. 3. Whether there be any virtue in these things in themselves, without God's requiring of them? Can outward water wash the soul? Can outward bread and wine feed or refresh it? In-

deed, if God require a man to wash his body with water, he ought to be subject, and there will be profit to him in his subjection; but of itself it is but a bodily exercise, and without God's requiring it, it would be but will-worship, and profit him nothing at all.

Now truly, the Lord did never require this of us; but hath shown us the water which our souls and bodies had need of to be washed with, and the bread and wine which they are to be fed and refreshed with: and in following the Lord according as he hath led us, and required of us, we have found reconciliation, life, rest, peace, and joy with our Father, and pure refreshment from him.

Q. 4. As touching duties: These are the two great duties we are taught, *To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and spirit; and our neighbour as ourselves.* And these we learn, by believing in him whom God hath sent, and receiving the seed of life from him; in the growth whereof in us we live, and are made one with him, and partakers of the ability which is of him. For, not by working of ourselves do we attain to this; but by the working of his powerful life in us, through his mercy to us. He circumciseth us, he cuts off the enmity, he brings under the old nature and spirit in us, and then the new springs up, and we are renewed in it. And in this, we learn and are made able to love the Lord, and his children, and his creatures, yea, all that is of him. And this love constrains us to obey the Lord, and deny all for him; so that, we can suffer any thing through his strength but sin, but corruption, but unbelief, but disobedience to him. Yea, this makes us so

tender towards him, that we can rather part with all of this world, than the integrity and subjection of our spirits to him in the least thing that he requires of us; his truth and our testimony thereto in every respect being far dearer to us than our lives, and all the enjoyments and pleasures of this present world.

From these two great duties flow many others as towards God; to fear him with the fear which is not taught by the precepts of men, but which he writes in our hearts; to wait upon him night and day in his temple, even in the holy place of his building; to call upon him in the motion, guidance, will, and help of his Spirit; for indeed, when once we learn of God, we are taught to pray no more after the flesh, no more after the will, wisdom, or way of man; as also to be sensible of his goodness, and give thanks to him in every condition.

And in this, we feel his presence and acceptance, as the Lord is not forgotten by us; but when we eat and drink, walk abroad, or stay at home, we feel him near, and our hearts acknowledge him, bow to him, wait upon him, bless him, praise his name, and speak words concerning him, or to him, with the outward voice, when he gives them, and requires them of us; but, of a truth, we dare bring no sacrifices of our own, nor kindle any fire or sparks of our own; but wait for the holy breath Spirit, and power of our God, to perform all in us and by us.

But now, because we do not pray at certain set times, as we formerly were wont to do, nor speak words before and after meat as formerly, and the like, ye are offended with us, and say we deny this

duty. No, no; we do not deny to God the prayer which is from the birth immortal; but this we say, and sensibly feel, prayer is a gift, and the ability thereof is in God's Spirit; for we know not what to pray for as we ought, nor have we a power in us to pray when or as we will; but in the Holy Spirit, in his breathing in us, is our ability; and we are to wait on him for the moving and breathing of his Spirit, and not to pray of ourselves, or in our own will or times, but in the Father's. And it is a mighty thing to speak to God aright in prayer. Flesh must be silent before him, and laid still and low in his presence, that the pure spring may open, the pure breath breathe, and the pure voice issue forth; for God heareth not sinners, but the born of him that doth his will. This must every soul witness in his measure, as Christ witnessed it in the fulness; and there is no serving God aright, or performing any duty or ordinance of worship to him aright, but in a measure of the same life and Spirit wherewith Christ served him.

Now, I do not only own the state of the Jews in their integrity, and of the primitive Christians in theirs, and of what the Lord hath caused to break forth in this our day, but I also own all the appearances of God all along the night of the apostasy, in the holy martyrs and witnesses which he raised up, and enabled to bear testimony to his truth, and against the antichristian practices of many in that dark night of the apostasy. And thus also, I own all the work of God in my own heart, and in the hearts of others whom he pleased to work upon, in former times; yea, the breathings and desires which are yet in the hearts of any after the Lord, so far as they are in the truth, and of and from the

Lord, I cannot but own. But the Lord hath shown me that there is a great mixture in men's desires and endeavours after him; and that the evil spirit by his subtlety doth often get the managing of them, and turn the very zeal and earnestness of the mind, through prejudices and misapprehensions, against the Lord and his truth. Now, this is a very dangerous state; and there are some (who little think so) in this state, doing that against the Lord, and against his Christ, his truth, his people, which, if ever their eyes be opened, they will mourn bitterly over; and if their eyes be not opened, but they walk on by a wrong light, even by a light of their own gathering, imagining, and conceiving, whither will it lead them, and what will their end be? O that ye could hear! O that ye could fear aright! O that ye could rightly consider! O that ye could feel the life and power of the Lord near you, the Word of life near you, even as near as ye have felt the enemy and his temptations, that ye might partake of and witness with joy the virtue and redemption of it! O that ye could once aright look upon him whom ye have pierced, and yet daily pierce, and cannot but pierce, until the righteous judgments of the Lord be poured out on the head of the transgressor in you, and the Lord waited upon, feared, and subjected to, in the way of his judgments, that ye may feel the refining work finished, the dross burned up, the temple prepared, the vessel brought pure out of the furnace! What then? Why when the Lord hath built up Zion, prepared his temple, cleansed his house, will he not appear there in his glory? Shall it not become an house of prayer, of pure prayer, and of pure praises?

Shall there be any lame or blind sacrifices offered up there? Shall it not be the beauty of holiness indeed? Shall not the appearance of the Lord be more glorious there, than ever it was in the temple and ordinances under the law? Shall not every living stone in this building, feel the God of life and power present of a truth, and feel not only the earth, but the very heavens melt before him and pass away, and nothing remain but the pure light and life of the Lamb?

Words, and promises spoken concerning things to be brought forth in the gospel state, do not go beyond the things spoken; but the things brought forth excel and go beyond the words, being so felt and enjoyed by that which is fitted and prepared by the Lord, as words cannot utter. The Lord God lead all that rightly desire after him into the right way, and preserve them therein, of meeting with and enjoying what their hearts rightly desire, and beat back the enemy in all his devices of entangling, perplexing, and drawing them aside; that they may receive the covenant, the new covenant, walk with God in the light thereof, live in the life thereof, obey through the power thereof; and may know what kind of meat and drink, what joy, delight, and pleasure it is to the soul to do the will, in the principle and by the power of the new life.

So, the Lord God Almighty, the Creator, Guider, and Preserver of his Israel, lead you out of the darkness, bring you through the wilderness, reveal the hope in you, and stay your minds thereon, and give you to feel the true travel and faithful walking with him in the footsteps of the flock, which he hath led and is leading his in, and unto



some of whom, in the tender mercy which from on high hath visited them, he hath given full rest and satisfaction in his truth.—*From a Piece entitled, "Of the Church in the first and pure state," &c. 1668. Works, vol. iii. p. 177.*

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A QUESTION ANSWERED *about the Way of knowing the Motions, Doctrines, and Teachings of CHRIST'S Spirit.*

*Quest.* How may a man know the motions, doctrines, and teachings of Christ's Spirit inwardly, from the deceivable movings, appearings, and workings of a contrary spirit? And how may a man know concerning the doctrines that others teach, whether they speak from Christ, or whether they speak of themselves?

*Ans.* This is a great matter indeed, and he must first receive somewhat from God, who is able to do this. He must be born of the wisdom that is from above, he must receive a spirit of discerning from God, he must receive somewhat of the sheep's ear, somewhat of the holy understanding, whereby he may be made able to distinguish spirituals, and put a difference between the pure and impure; between the pretender to the things of God, and him which is indeed of God. There is a balance of the sanctuary appointed to weigh spiritual things and appearances in; and by this balance alone are they truly and rightly discerned and distinguished; and this balance is in the sanctuary, in the holy, heavenly place in Christ Jesus, where the true weight of spiritual things (or things that pre-

tend to be truly spiritual and living, but are not) is given and discerned. But he that weighs without this, he that weighs by his own judgment and understanding, by his own comprehension and conceivings; he weighs by that which is uncertain, changeable, and fallible, and turns up and down according to the appearances of things to him, but judgeth not the righteous judgment, which is from the sense and in the light of truth.

Therefore, oh! that men were humble, tender, meek, and sensible of their inability to judge as of themselves, that they might see their need of this gift of God, and wait upon him for it; being in the mean time as the weaned child, not meddling with things too high for them, but keeping and abiding low, in fear and subjection to that which the Lord hath already made manifest to them. For, what man is there, to whom the Lord hath not already, in his tender mercy and goodness, made somewhat of himself manifest? Who is there, who by the light of the Spirit of God in his conscience, knoweth not some evil which he ought to leave undone, and some good which he ought to do? Now, this is the way of God, and the work which man should be exercised in, to feel his mind gathered into that which teacheth this, that he might receive power from the Lord to cease to do the evil which he is thus warned by him of, and to do the good which is thus required of him. For, thus the Spirit of the Lord teacheth and requireth of men, even inwardly in their secret parts, secretly quickening and enlivening them in some measure, and giving them a sense of their sin, death, separation from him, misery, and danger thereby; for where there is any sight of sin, and any sense of

the burden thereof, there is some life, some light, some little stirrings of the life, and some quickenings thereby, without which this sense could not be.

Now mark. Are not here the drawings of the Father? Are not here the teachings of the Father, though but in a little measure; yet true, yet living? Is not here some little discerning given between the precious and the vile; between somewhat that is of God, and somewhat that is against him? Well then, here is the gift of discerning, though in a poor, low, little, weak measure; and that man who receiveth this, receiveth the beginnings of the gift, somewhat of the gift, whereby he may be able to discern and distinguish a little about spiritual things, so far as the light and ability of the gift in him extendeth.

Now, this is man's work, and in this lies his safety, to come hither, abide here, and grow here. Not to judge out of this; to judge no further concerning the things of God, than this judgeth in him; to keep the judgment which he hath from this; not hearkening to the subtle devices of the enemy, which will strive afterward to cloud his mind, delude and deceive him, with a false appearance of wise reasonings and disputings of his own, or from other men, to make him believe otherwise. And so, keeping what ground he hath gained, he is to wait for more of this light, more of this life, more of this virtue, that his soul may grow up and increase therein, that his eye may be strengthened to see further, and his ear to hear further, and his heart to embrace more of the instructions and directions of the Spirit of the Lord, unto and in the way of the kingdom.

Therefore the man that would meet with, and

receive from God, the gift of discerning, let him mind the present manifestation of God's light from his Spirit in his heart; embrace that, fall in with that, take heed of the reasonings of the mind against the convictions and demonstrations of God's Spirit; but receive the truth in the love of it, even the lowest appearance of truth, about the least and most despicable things, and give up faithfully to the Lord therein, without murmuring, without disputing, without consulting with flesh and blood. And he that is faithful to the light of the Spirit, and to the discerning which is thereby, in the little, he shall receive more, he shall have his light and discerning thereby increased, as his need requireth. But he that stands disputing, and would have all his way made clear to him, before he sets one step in it; he is far from becoming that child, which the Father teacheth, and administereth an entrance into the kingdom to.

This, in effect, was the very answer which Christ gave to this thing in the days of his flesh, when there were great disputes concerning his doctrine, how to know whether it was of God or no. What was the resolution he gave of this; "If any man," saith he, "will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself," John, vii. 17. Wouldst thou know of the Son's doctrine? Wouldst thou know whether it be the doctrine of the Son indeed, the doctrine of him who comes from the Father? "Yes, very fain," will the upright heart say; "Oh! that I might know concerning what rises and opens in my heart, whether it be from the Spirit of God, or from the root of deceit in me!" Why this is the way; do the Father's will.

*Object.* Do the Father's will; why what an an-

swer is this! The dispute is about the Father's will. Is not the doctrine of the Son the Father's will? How can I do the Father's will, which the Son is to teach me, until I first know of the Son's doctrine?

*Ans.* It is true, the Son's doctrine is the Father's will, and thou canst not do the Father's will, but as thou receivest the Son's doctrine. But mark; There are disputes in thy mind about somewhat of the Son's doctrine, whether it be his doctrine or no; somewhat also about inward motions, workings, and stirrings in thee, which thou wouldst fain know whence they are. Now, the question is concerning the way how thou mayst attain to this; how thou mayst come to a certain and satisfactory knowledge herein? Which is, not by entering into reasonings and disputes about these things whereof thou doubtest, but by coming into that wherein and whereby they are made manifest; and that is by coming into obedience to the Father in that, which he hath already made manifest; for, in that light (to them that believe in it) and in obedience thereto, (be it ever so little, or the manifestation ever so small) the Father will reveal more, and give to that heart and mind to be sensible of what is of him, and what is of the enemy, so far as it is needful for it as yet to know. For wise and absolute judgment in all things is not necessary for a babe; but sense to know the breast, and to receive from it the milk, by which it is to be fed that it may grow. This is enough in its present state; yet, if there be need of strength at any time to still the enemy and the avenger, the Lord will reveal it in the heart, and bring it forth out of the mouths of the babes and sucklings, to the perfecting of his praise.

So, mind and learn the way, O ye that are simple-hearted, and truly desire after the Lord, and the purity and power of his kingdom, and take heed of the wrong way; take heed of man's way, which is by consulting with his own wisdom, and weighing things in the balance of his own reason and understanding; and thus he may weigh Scriptures written in former ages, and the appearances of God in this age, and err in heart, mind, and judgment concerning them both, all his days. But he that waits on the Lord in fear, and in obedience to that which is already made manifest, not desiring knowledge from God in his own will, time, or way, but in the Lord's, who perfectly knows every one's state, and what is fit for him; he shall know concerning every doctrine his heart desireth to be instructed in, in the Lord's season; and in the mean time, the Lord will feed him with food convenient, and clothe him with clothing convenient; and there shall be no want to him, who boweth before the Lord in what is already made manifest, and waiteth for his further manifestations and appearances. But the wise hunter after knowledge, before the Lord leads, and further than he leads and teaches; this is the first birth, which is excluded the kingdom and the mysteries thereof: this is he who always despised and would still kill the heir, that the inheritance might be his; but the inheritance is appointed for and given to another; even to the Lamb's nature, the Lamb's Spirit, the Lamb's innocency, the birth of another wisdom, which is a foolish weak birth in his eye, and not worthy at all to inherit; but it is the Father's pleasure to give the kingdom and inheritance of life everlasting to these.

To speak yet a little more plainly, and bring it

yet a little closer to the heart, if it may be. It hath pleased the Father, in this day of his love and power, to gather to himself a little flock out of the world, and all worldly professions of worship and religion. This flock he hath gathered by a poor, little, low thing in their hearts, exercising them thereby in poor, mean, and contemptible ways to the eye of the world, and to all the professions of man's wisdom; and by this, and concerning this, he testifieth (through those whom he hath gathered) to others. And the testimony doth evidence itself, through the power of the Spirit, to all that wait upon God for an ear, and hear in the simplicity thereof.

Now, when we tell men of a divine principle, of a seed of God, wherein their religion is to begin, and from which it is to grow, and whereof they are to be born; this will enter into many, yea, many will assent to be drawn so far as to wait inwardly for and upon this. But now, when this begins to stir and move in them, it is in such a way, and many times about such low, mean, contemptible things in their eyes, that they are very apt to despise it, and enter into disputes against it, and so miss of the entrance, and can never thus enter into it; but instead thereof, are filled with doubts about the leader and his motions, and puzzled and entangled in their minds, and stopt at the very beginning. And so, though they desire much, and hope much, yet all comes to little, because the enemy hath possessed their minds with a device of his subtlety, as if these were small things and of little concernment. That which they want is the powerful life, the clear light, &c. and so their minds are taken up with thoughts about these

great things, and desires after these great things, and they overlook the way wherein and whereby these are to be witnessed and obtained.

For the Lord God, in his infinite wisdom, picked out these contemptible things to exercise his flock by, and to lead them in. And whatever men may think of them, yet none knows, but they who experience it, how hard it is to follow and subject to the Lord in these, and how much they bow down and break the earthly and uncircumcised spirit in a man. Now, friend, thou who desirest life from God, oh! take heed thou dost not beat back the beginnings of his life, and the redemption of thy soul, by despising and overlooking the day of small things. Why may not God choose to lead thee in the way that he hath led the rest of his flock? Why shouldst not thou also come to deny the customs and vanities of this world, and come into that which is simple and plain, and stand in the will and life of God out of them? Are not the ways, customs, and vanities of the world, of the spirit of the world, and not of the Father? Did they not come from the corrupt part? Are they not of the corrupt part? Do they not please the corrupt part? Must they not be left behind by him that travels into the seed, is one with the seed, and lives in the seed? Why wilt thou stick in these things? Why wilt thou dispute about these things? Oh! feel the Father's drawings, first out of the world, first out of that which is not of the Father, but of the world, that he may draw thee further and further, even into the kingdom and power everlasting, which are many days' journey beyond that which thou stickest at.



Now mind and remember this which followeth :

In the days of Christ and his apostles, God chose the foolish things, and the weak things, and things that were not, to hide the path of life, and the mysteries of his kingdom, from the wise searching eye of man in those days. Why may he not choose the like things now? Why may he not now reveal things to the babes, and not to the wise of this age and generation? Why may it not be to his glory, to have it now said also, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the learned man? Where is the disputer of this world?" Can any of them find out that, or any of them discern that, which God revealeth to his little ones? No, no: they are generally got too high above that little, low, tender, meek, sensible principle, in the faith whereof, and in obedience whereto, the teachings of God are received, and his life and power witnessed. And because of their riches, wisdom, and knowledge out of this, therefore is the entrance into the pure living truth (which cleanseth the mind, and keepeth it clean, which quickeneth it, and keepeth it living,) to them so exceeding difficult.

And as the principle is little, the seed of the kingdom little, like a grain of mustard seed, the least of all seeds; so, why may not its appearance also be little, even in low weak things, despicable to man's eye and wisdom; which man sees nothing in, and may account of no value? And yet the power of the cross, (which brings down and slays the corruptible,) and the resurrection of the life, may be witnessed and felt in them. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men:" and he knoweth what he

doth in leading his children in this contemptible path, and by these contemptible exercises, which all that is wise, high, lofty, and aspiring, according to the flesh, may easily overlook and slight, but can hardly stoop down and subject to.

God is the same that he ever was; and he still appears in the way of his own wisdom, and out of man's; and he that will partake of God's wisdom must deny and keep out of his own. His touches, his drawings, his teachings, his blessings, his love, his peace, his joy, his sweetness, &c. are let forth upon, felt, and enjoyed by the soul, in the new creation, in the new sense, in the denial and passing out of the old.—*From the same. Works, vol. iii. p. 195.*

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#### SOME REMARKS CONCERNING THE TRUE CHURCH AND MINISTRY.

THERE is a great noise in the world about church and ministry. Many are affirming which is it, and many are doubtful and inquiring about it; and many are truly and groundedly satisfied, having received the knowledge of the thing from God, who is not deceived about it, nor deceiveth any, but giveth the true understanding of these and other things, to them that wait upon him aright; to wit, in his fear, and in the silence of the fleshly wise part before him. Now, I have a testimony to give concerning these things, which that ear which is of God can hear, and to that I desire to speak.

That is the church which is the spiritual body of Christ. The church is Christ's spouse, he the

husband. The head is living, and so are all the members of the body. The head is anointed, and the oil wherewith the head is anointed, runs down from the head upon all the body; and that upon which the oil runs not, is none of the body. Now, no outward thing can make one a member of this body; much less can any outward thing, way, profession, or practice, make a church. The church under the law was made so by outward things, by an outward gathering, an outward circumcision, an outward law, an outward worship, &c. but the gospel is a state of substance, a state of the invisible things, of persons invisibly gathered by the Spirit into the life and power of God, inwardly circumcised, inwardly baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, inwardly worshipping in Spirit and truth, bowing at every sound and name of the Lord Jesus: and what is of an outward state here is brought forth and preserved by the power of the inward appearing, and dwelling in it. So that this is the church now: a people gathered by the life and Spirit of the Lord; a people gathered by the power from on high, abiding in the power, acting in the power, worshipping in the power, keeping in the holy order and government of life, both inwardly in their own hearts, and outwardly in their assemblings and walkings by the power. Christ was made a king, priest, and prophet, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life; and in this power he gathers, governs, and preserves his church, and ministereth from and by his Spirit and power in it. Now, find this power of the endless life, find a people anywhere gathered by this power, and in this power; there is the church, there is the living

body, there is Christ the head, whose dominion and strength is over all, against whom the gates of hell cannot prevail.

And so for the ministers of this church. The same thing that gives to know the church, gives to know the ministers thereof; for they also are of God, called by him, receiving power from him, and abiding and ministering in that power. So that there are three things requisite to a true ministry, without which they cannot be right, or execute their office rightly.

1. *They must be called by God.* The ministry under the law, this was their warrant; they were called and appointed of God thereunto. Christ himself took not the honour to himself, but he was called of God to this priesthood, as Aaron to his. So the apostles and ministers, in the first publication of the gospel, were called and appointed by Christ. And when the everlasting gospel is again to be preached, God sends his angel with it, as Rev. xiv. 6.

2. *They must receive ability and power from God.* The elders that were to help Moses, were to receive of his spirit. Under the law, the priests were to be anointed with the outward literal oil, and the ministers of the gospel are to be anointed with the inward spiritual oil. Their work is spiritual; and how can they perform it, but by the anointing, by that presence, guidance, life, virtue, and power of the Spirit, putting itself forth in them? The apostles themselves, who had been taught by Christ, who knew his conversation and doctrine, who were eyewitnesses of what they were to publish, and had received an authority and commission from him, yet were not to go forth merely upon this call and

commission, but to wait for power from on high ; and when they had received the Spirit and power, then they were made able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit and power.

3. *They must abide in the power, keep in the power, feel the motion, virtue, and assistance of the power, in all their work and service.* They must neither pull down, nor build up, nor watch over, or oversee the flock in their own wisdom, in their own spirit, in their own wills ; but in the anointing, in the light and guidance of the Lord. This gathering, this building, this work of the Lord begins out of flesh, out of man ; and flesh must be kept out of the whole carrying on of it.

And indeed, unless the ministers of the gospel be in the Spirit, in the life, in the power, how can they minister to the nature, to the spirit, to the life in the body ? yea, so much as to the least member in the body ? They may minister outward knowledge to the man's wisdom, to the man's understanding ; but that is not the food that is to be ministered to the church, nor is that part in man to be fed by the true minister. But they are to minister life, living food, from the living fountain, from the Head, from the Spirit of Christ in them, to the particular members under their charge ; and so are to be good stewards and shepherds to the flock, giving every one their proper portion in due season.

It was no small matter to be a minister under the law. It was easy to err, and minister amiss then. It was easy erring from the letter, unless great care and circumspection was used to keep strictly to it.

But, it is a much more weighty thing to minis-

ter under the gospel, to receive the power, to minister in power, to that which is begotten and born of the power. And this is precious, and (without controversy) of God, wherever it is found. But, they only that are of God can hear and receive this ministry, (as 1 John, iv. 6.) The uncircumcised ear cannot hear here, nor the wise and knowing according to the flesh. The wisdom of God is foolishness to him, and the mysteries of his kingdom (the mystery of his life, and the true godliness) are riddles, and direct madness to the eye of his wisdom : so far is man degenerated from God, and bound down with chains of darkness and corruption. And he that would know the true church, or be of it, and hear the voice of God in his true ministry, must first take up the cross to that part in him which is not of God, and receive from God the eye which sees, and the ear which hears.—*From "A Further Testimony to the Truth," &c. 1680, Works, vol. iv. p. 8.*

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A CAUTION TO THOSE WHO ARE AT ANY TIME TOUCHED WITH THE POWER OF TRUTH ; *how they afterwards hearken to and let in the Enemy, and so thereby have the good seed stolen away, the true sense lost, and the mind filled with prejudices and stumbling-blocks instead thereof.*

THE Truth of God being received into the inward parts, is found to be of a living powerful nature, working mightily there for the cleansing and redeeming of the hearts. Yea, this is certainly witnessed, that as the mind, joined to deceit, is thereby

defiled; so the mind, joined to the truth of God, is by its power and virtue purified.

Now, having felt this, and being filled with the love and good-will of God to the souls of others, how can we but testify it to others, who stand in need of God's truth and its cleansing property and virtue, as well as we; especially being thereunto moved and drawn by the Spirit of the Lord?

Now, when the Lord giveth forth the sound in its power and life, it many times pierceth deeply through the earthly veil, and reacheth to its own; which, being reached to, answers to the testimony, saying, It is truth. So, here is a beginning of the work of God in that heart, the soul being touched with his truth, feeling it inwardly, and yielding in some measure to the overcoming virtue and power of it.

But, then comes the subtle one, whose design and labour is to undermine and overturn the work of God in the soul; and he begets doubts, and jealousies, and questionings, both concerning us and concerning the doctrine taught by us, to suggest into the mind, as if it were not, nor indeed could be of God: and so, bringing the dispute and determination into another part than where truth got entrance, he easily sways the mind to determine against its own former feeling, and to turn from that work which was begun to be wrought in it by God, and from the worker also. And thus, many poor hearts are entangled and carried back into captivity, who began to feel the stirrings of truth in their hearts, wherein is the power of redemption, which would have redeemed them as well as others, had they received it in the love of it, and become subject to it.

Oh! it is a precious thing to receive from God a spirit of discerning, which gives ability to discern his Spirit from the spirit of deceit! yea, it is impossible to be preserved in the right Spirit and way, but as this is felt. For, how can the Lord be received in all the motions and operations of his Spirit? or how can the contrary spirit be turned from in all its subtle devices, twistings, and reasonings in the mind, unless there be a discerning in the true light of the Lord, what is of the one, and what of the other?

And ye that would not be deceived, sink deep beneath the thoughts, reasonings, and consultations of the earthly mind, that ye may meet with somewhat of the kingdom and power (which carries its own evidence and demonstration with it) and may be gathered into it, and find a sense, knowledge, and judgment there, which never was deceived, nor can deceive. Know the elect of God, which the deceits pass over, and cannot reach; for its nature and birth is beyond them. It came from the light of the Father. It lives in the light of the Father. It sees in that light; yea, there its judgment and understanding is, where deceit never had power to enter. But he that considers as a man, sees as a man, judges as a man, concerning the things of God, by what he can gather out of the Scriptures, or conclude from his own sense, knowledge, and experience, he may easily err; yea, indeed, he is in the way of error in so doing. For the pure religion, the pure knowledge, the right judgment, the living faith, begins in the power and demonstration of the Spirit; and these are its limits, out of flesh, out of man, out of his will, out of his wisdom, out of the compass of his compre-



hension. And he that passeth not these bounds, never meets with the life, power, and virtue of truth. He may meet with a body of notions and formed knowledge, wherein he may tell of the fall of man, and restoration by Christ, and very exactly, according to a literal description: but the life, the true knowledge, the powerful virtue is another thing, and is met with in another country, whither man cannot travel, but as he is stripped of himself, and new formed, made, and brought forth in another.

Oh! therefore, ye that desire after the Lord, that would be his, that would feel him yours, that would know his truth in the life and power of it, wait for the demonstrations of his Spirit; learn to distinguish inwardly, between his teachings from his Spirit, and the teachings of another spirit from the letter. For it is so, indeed: that other spirit would have so taught Christ; and he will so teach any else, that will hearken to him. Now, he that is so taught, and follows such teachings, wanders from God, is not accepted with him, but follows that which leads from him, under a pretence and appearance of leading to him. And here, hardness and deadness grow and increase, the soul being turned from that which is living, and alone able to give life.

*Quest.* But how may I do, who am weak, and full of doubts and fears, to keep in the sense of truth, and to come to a certainty that I am not deceived therein?

*Ans.* To thee, who puttest this question in the uprightness and simplicity of thy heart, I have somewhat to say.

1. *Mind how thou wast touched, mind how thou*

wast reached, observe what ear was opened in thee, and breathe to the Lord to keep that ear open in thee, and the other shut. For this I can assure thee in the truth of God, that with that ear which the Lord opened to truth (which thou feltest his Spirit unlocking in thee, and letting in truth by) I say, with that ear thou shalt never be able to let in any thing afterwards contrary to truth. But if the enemy can open the other ear, *that* will hear his prejudices, his jealousies, his doubts, his fears, his temptations, and let them in, to thrust out that which entered at the other ear. Now canst thou not distinguish, O poor soul, (a little to help thee,) between that which brought some sense of truth into thee, and that which ariseth in thee against truth? O fear before the Lord! O watch and pray, that when the tempter comes, thou enter not with him into temptation, and so lose thy union and growth in that which is invaluable.

2. *Keep thine eye and heart upon the preciousness of what thou feltest.* O remember, how fresh, how warm, how living it was; how it reached, how it overcame, how it melted! The remembrance of this, cleaved to in the mind, will be a strength against the temptations and subtle devices of the enemy.

3. *Meddle not with the things that the enemy casts into thy mind.* Consider not whether they be so or no. He that considers of a temptation (in many cases) hath let it in, and is overcome already. When Eve did but hearken to what the serpent said, how soon was she lost and gone? The enemy many times brings temptations beyond the state, capacity, and ability of the soul to determine. These things, at present, are too high for thee.

Thou hast not yet received a proportion of life from God to determine them by; and if thou run beyond thy measure, and determine things in thy mind, which as yet are beyond thy reach, thou must needs run into the snare.

4. *The present determining of those things would not be of so great advantage to thee, as thou mayst apprehend.* Why so? Because the enemy hath many temptations and devices of the same kind, as well as of other kinds, which he would bring one after another. And when he brings a second, a third, &c. that which engaged thee to consider of the first, would engage thee also to consider of the rest. And if thou couldst find one answered, and not the other, that would appear to thee as so much the more weighty, and thou wouldst hardly be able to escape consenting to the tempter therein. Therefore, the way is to keep out of him, in the upright sense of what the Lord wrought in thee; for, so far, he is with thee, and abiding there, thou art out of the enemy's reach. But, being drawn by the enemy to consider of things that are out of thy reach, thou therein layest thyself open to his snares and betrayings.

5. *Mind what was forbidden thee, or required of thee in that time, when thou feltest the warmth from God.* For there is then an heavenly voice, and an heavenly vision most commonly in the heart, though the enemy turns the mind, as much as may be, from heeding it. There is then, oftentimes, somewhat of the worldly nature and course discovered, or somewhat of God's will made manifest; somewhat that thou dost (or hast done) which then thou seest to be not of the Father, but of the world; and somewhat perhaps of the Father, which thou

knowest thou oughtst to become subject to, but thou art afraid of the cross, or shame, or wouldst fain have some more clearness first. Oh ! call this to mind afterwards ; and if ever thou wouldst receive life, and come into union with God's truth, and receive his Spirit and power, and be established therein ; become obedient to the heavenly vision ! Consult not with flesh and blood, but enter into the obedience of that very thing, which was forbid or required, be it little or much. This is the right way, this is that thy mind should be exercised in. And if thy mind be exercised faithfully here, the Lord will strengthen thee against the tempter, when he comes with his temptations and subtle objections. But if thou falter here, and become unfaithful in the little, thou art not like to meet with more, no, nor with the preservation of the Lord in that little. And indeed, this is the cause of the miscarriage of many, because they received not that little which was made manifest, in the love of it ; but had pleasure in the unrighteousness, and so lingered in pleasing the spirit of the world, both in themselves and others, when they were called by the Lord to quit it, and travel out of it.

6. *Wait for the renewings of life and sense in thee from God ;* wait for another visit, wait for another touch and demonstration of his Spirit. Where didst thou meet with it ? Go thither again, wait there again, and look up to the Lord to stay thy spirit till he appear again.

But, oh ! take heed, that before the light arise again, before the life stir again, thou be not gone (by hearkening to temptations) into an incapacity of knowing or receiving it. For, this is the way of the Lord, the experienced way ; after him, after

the touches of his truth, comes the tempter with his reasonings, deceits, likenesses, &c. Now, the Lord is trying thee, how thy heart will stick to him: and if thou come off from the temptation, if thou stand clear of the enemy, the Lord will appear to thee again; strengthen thee, comfort thee, open more to thee, lead thee further in the way of life, and nearer to the power and purity thereof: but, if thou draw back from that, wherein the Lord began to work, the Lord's soul hath no pleasure to appear any further to thee, or work any further in thee.

And one thing I will tell thee. If thou let not in the enemy's temptations, but abide, under the clouds, under the storms, under the tempests, under the confused reasonings, fears, doubts, and troubles, looking towards the Lord, waiting for him, and not making a league with the enemy against him in the meantime, the Lord will certainly appear; and when he doth appear, thou shalt find one of these two effects. Either the power of the enemy's objections, or temptations, will be so broken, as thou shalt not then heed them; or they will be so answered by the appearance and light of the Spirit of the Lord, as thou shalt be satisfied about them. Now, which of these is the better for thee, the Lord God knows, and *that* thou shalt be sure to receive from him in that hour; neither will he leave thee, but secretly support thee in the meantime; thy eye and mind being towards him.

The light and power of the Lord, when it ariseth, scatters and breaks that into pieces in the mind, which was very powerful before; so, as the soul doth not now so much as mind the considering or knowing of that, which the enemy hath made it

believe was so necessary for it to know. For, mark: that which causeth me to grow, is the feeling of life, the sense of the Lord's presence and power with me, the living knowledge, the knowledge which quickens, and gives life. Now, when the life springs, when the light shines, when the Lord in the power and precious visitations of his truth, reacheth to my heart, this is present with me. Then, what matter I those objections and prejudices, which the enemy casts into my mind? Nay, I cannot heed them, being taken up with another thing of a deeper nature. Thus have I often found it by experience: all that troubled me, and that I doubted of, vanishing in a moment; that being present with me, and prevailing in me, which puts an end to all thoughts, reasonings, and disputes.

Again, it pleaseth the Lord at other times, when he seeth good, to open the mind, and let it into the sight of those things, (it waiting upon him, and letting them alone his season,) which of itself it could never have waded through. Thus also have I seen the objections and stumbling-blocks concerning this precious people, who are of God, as the first-fruits of his powerful visitation after the apostasy; concerning their principle, way, doctrine, practices, &c. opened unto me in the clear light of God, and in the holy demonstrations of his Spirit; insomuch as I have manifestly seen, and been fully satisfied, that what was objected in my own heart, and is objected to in the hearts of others, hath been from the subtle accuser of the brethren, who beareth false witness against them, and would draw as many as he can to partake in his false testimony, and so also to become false

witnesses against God, his truth, and people. Therefore beware, all ye that desire after the Lord, and would meet with the rest and satisfaction of your souls in him, how ye be prejudiced against that, whereby God worketh in others, and whereby he hath appointed to work in you, and all whom he worketh in. For he hath sent his Son to give life, and he will not give life by another. And he hath appointed his Son shall be received as a principle, as a seed of life, though as little as a grain of mustard-seed; yet thus must he be received; and in this his low appearance hath he the presence of God with him, and his power and authority; and what he, this little seed (though ever so little) requires, teaches, forbids, &c. must be observed. But, there is none upon the earth can own or submit to this, but he that becomes a child also; yea, a very little child. Man's spirit, man's wisdom, man's knowledge, man's religion, man's zeal, &c. is too big to enter here. Men are too wise, too knowing, too rich from Scriptures and experiences to submit to this; as the Scribes and Pharisees, were to submit to Christ's appearance, doctrines, and preachings, when he appeared among them in that body of flesh. Therefore, come into the true feeling, out of the dead knowledge into the living sense, where life, power, righteousness, yea, the peace and joy of the kingdom, is tasted of, and in some measure witnessed by those, who bow down in spirit before the least or lowest name or appearance of Jesus; the lowest degree and measure of whose life is King and Lord over death for ever.—*From the same Works*, vol. iv. p. 15.

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THE WAY OF LIFE AND SALVATION IS FREELY HELD FORTH BY GOD TO ALL; *and there is nothing in him to let, stop, or discourage any man from receiving his TRUTH, and giving up to him in the Faith and Obedience of it, but very much to invite and encourage.*

IT hath pleased the Lord, who is over all and good unto all, to provide a remedy for the sin and transgression of the creature. For, as sin hath abounded unto death, so he hath caused righteousness to abound unto life; yea, the free gift, which is as large and universal as ever sin was, hath more power in it to save, than sin hath to destroy. And there is no ground of discouragement for any, in reference to God, who hath not outsinned the day of their visitation, and so the offer of mercy is over as to them; though the enemy of the soul strives to raise up many discouragements and objections in the minds of many, to keep them from hoping in the Lord, and from giving up to his truth, which saveth all that receive it and abide in it. Now, it is in my heart at this time, from a true sense, to signify somewhat concerning the nature of the Lord, and his real desire to save even those that perish, which may conduce towards the removing of objections and lets of this nature out of the minds of men.

1. God is sweetness, meekness, gentleness, tenderness, abounding in mercy and loving-kindness, pitying the miserable, and naturally holding forth an helping hand towards them: yea, he is universally thus. There is not one miserable soul, not one perishing creature upon the face of the earth,



but as he hath wisdom and power to help it, so he hath tender bowels, and an heart thereunto. And it is not for want of somewhat to be done on his part, that souls perish, but the failing always was, and still is, on the creature's part.

2. God loveth all his creatures, and cannot but be good to them. He is outwardly good, he is inwardly good to them all. He can do nothing against any one of them, but what stands with his love and mercy. He doth not forget himself; he doth not lose his nature in the manifesting of his righteousness, wrath, and severity against sin and sinners.

3. He desires not the death of a sinner, nay, not of the wicked. How mercifully did he walk with the Jews in the first covenant? Did he ever desire their miscarriages, and the miseries which came upon them thereby? Nay, did he not desire their good, and their obedient walking with him therein for their good? "O! (said he) that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them," &c. Deut. v. 29. How mercifully doth he walk with all in the second covenant, that are in any measure drawn within the limits and compass thereof! He is a Saviour, that is his nature; and he seeketh the salvation of his creatures with his whole heart, and with all his soul. And when he bringeth any to repentance, there is joy in his bosom: and when the enemy breaketh in upon any of his, or by any subtlety draweth them into that which destroyeth, his pure tender Spirit is grieved therewith, and mourneth because of it. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," said his true living image, with tears, "how often would I have gathered thee!"

4. He would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. God sends his truth, his powerful truth, to save; and he shuts not any one out of it; but seeks, in the way he hath appointed, to gather all into it, that they might be saved by it.

5. He is very patient and long-suffering, waits long, tries long, invites often, touches often, draws often; yea, the very vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, there is much patience and long-suffering exercised towards them, before the Lord can cast them off, and give them up utterly to destruction. For mark, destruction is not his work or delight; it is the work of a spirit and nature contrary to his. "I came not," saith Christ, "to destroy men's lives, but to save;" to give life to them. And this is the proper end of God in every administration: his end is not death, destruction, increasing of the condemnation of the creature, &c. but to bring it to life thereby, out of that which leadeth into the condemnation and destruction. Did he not for this end bear with the old world? Was not this the end of Noah's preaching to them, and warning of them? Did he not for this end bear with the Jews in Egypt, in the wilderness, in Canaan, &c.? Is not this the proper intent of the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God, that it should lead to repentance? (Rom. ii. 4.) and repentance leads to mercy, remission, and life.

6. The sacrifice of Christ had relation to all men. He was sent out of God's universal love to mankind, to the whole world; and was made a propitiation by God for the sins of the whole world.

7. There is no man perisheth for want of power; for there is power in the free gift which comes

upon all. There is power in it to quicken, to give faith, to preserve in the faith, to do all that is to be done in the soul; and it doth all everywhere, as it findeth place and entertainment in the soul. But man refuseth, man loveth the darkness, hateth the light, shutteth his eyes against it, withdraweth his heart from it, and so beateth back the purpose and counsel of God's love and good-will towards him. For, as the Jews outwardly, in that outward covenant, almost always rebelled, resisted, and brought wrath upon themselves, to the grief of God's heart and of his holy prophets; so do men in reference to the inward covenant, (in that nature and spirit,) exceedingly provoking the Lord, until his Spirit, in its holy jealousy and indignation, turn from them, and give them up to hardness, senselessness, and impenitency, which sealeth up to destruction. But as Israel, in that first covenant, could never justly lay the cause of their destruction on God, but God did most justly lay it on them, "O Israel! thy destruction is of thyself, but in me is thy help;" so, neither can any blame the Lord, who perish from and fall short of the virtue of the second covenant: for he faileth not in doing his part therein, no more than he did fail in the first. But, man turneth from the power which saves, from the light which makes manifest, from the life which quickens; and this is his condemnation, and the cause of his perishing: so that, God will be just and clear of the blood of all men, and the blood of them that perish will lie upon their own heads. Had there not been somewhat near every man, which had more power in it than sin had, they might have had some plea before the Lord; but the presence of this, the power of

this, the working of this in every heart, more or less, leaves all men without excuse, and clears the free-giver, and his free gift in the balance of righteousness. For, this gift of his is faithful to every man upon the face of the earth, never consenting to his iniquities and transgressions in any kind, but still testifying against them, as the Lord pleaseth to open its mouth. But, who hath believed its report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Yet, greater will the condemnation be upon them, upon whom the Lord hath more abundantly shined; and many will have a plea in respect of them, which the Lord will hear and consider, and so they shall not enter into that depth of judgment and condemnation, which will light on such as have resisted the light and power of life, in its more glorious and bright appearances and strivings with them; even as Christ said, "It shall be easier for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida, Capernaum and Jerusalem."

Therefore, O all men upon the earth, know the day of your visitation! Make peace with the Lord, O transgressors! lay hold on his strength, that ye may make peace with him. Believe not the liar, who would put you out of hope, but believe the voice of his love and tender Spirit. Turn in, listen after him, watch if he do not call, mind if he do not draw; and do not say, I want power; but wait in humility, meekness, and fear, until his power arise. Bear his judgments, wait upon him in the way of his judgments. Do not fly from him because thereof; for therein is the mercy, life, and salvation. Be not hasty, but wait long, believe long, hope long, feel the pa-

tience of the Lamb, learn the mysterious path of life from the inward teacher, that ye may certainly know it, and find your feet guided by his Spirit into it.

Is not the voice gone forth from him that is true? "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, &c. and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And is not he near who causeth the thirst, and giveth the will? Whom hath the Lord excluded? Why should any man exclude himself? The call is universal, the way is set open to all. That is at hand, which hath life and power in it, and is ready to work in all. This commandment hath it received of its Father; and it is faithful, which hath received it: and all that come to the Father here, in this gathering of life, the Father is ready to receive. Thy soul, O man! is the Lord's. It is very precious in his eye: he seeks to save it, and hath sent somewhat into thy heart, to gather thee from that which would destroy it. And this, which he hath sent, hath in it of the Father's love, of the Father's mercy, of the Father's power, of the Father's light, of the Father's life, of the Father's wisdom, righteousness, &c. and will gather thee out of the world into the Father's nature and Spirit, if thou wilt hearken to him with the ear which he will give thee, and receive him with the heart which he will create in thee: yea, he will help thee to turn from and forsake thy own wickedness, and the wicked spirit, and to turn towards him who is life, righteousness, and peace to the soul that is gathered unto him; do but give up thyself, in the faith and obedience which he is creating in thee, in the way of his quickening and renewing life.—*From the same. Works, vol. iv. p. 38.*

A BRIEF ACCOUNT CONCERNING SILENT MEETINGS;  
*the Nature, Use, Intent, and Benefit of them.*

THIS is a great mystery, hid from the eye of man, who is run from the inward life into outward observations. He cannot see, either that this is required by the Lord of his people, or any edification therein or benefit thereby; but, to the mind that is drawn inward, the thing is plain; and the building up hereby in the life of God, and fellowship one with another therein, is sweetly felt; and precious refreshment from the presence of the Lord received by them, who singly herein wait upon him, according to the leadings and requiremings of his Holy Spirit. Now, to open the thing a little to the upright-hearted, if the Lord please.

After the mind is in some measure turned to the Lord, his quickenings felt, his seed beginning to arise and spring up in the heart, then the flesh is to be silent before him, and the soul to wait upon him, and for his further appearings, in that measure of life which is already revealed. Now, this is a great thing to know flesh silenced, to feel the reasoning thoughts and discourses of the fleshly mind stilled, and the wisdom, light, and guidance of God's Spirit waited for. For, man is to come into the poverty of self, into the abasedness, into the nothingness, into the silence of his spirit before the Lord; into the putting off of all his knowledge, wisdom, understanding, abilities, all that he is, hath done, or can do, (out of this measure of life, into which he is to travel,) that he may be clothed and filled with the nature, Spirit, and power of the Lord.

Now, in this measure of life, which is of Christ, and in which Christ is, and appears to the soul, there is the power of life and death; power to kill to the flesh, and power to quicken to God; power to cause the soul to cease from its own workings, and power to work in and for the soul what God requires, and what is acceptable in his sight. And in this, God is to be waited upon and worshipped continually, both in private and in public, according as his Spirit draws and teaches.

For, the Lord requireth of his people not only to worship him apart, but to meet together to worship him, in the seasons and according to the drawings of his Spirit: and they that are taught of him, dare not forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is; but watch against the temptations and snares, which the enemy lays to deceive them therefrom, and to disturb their sense by, that they might not feel the drawings of the Father thereunto.

And this is the manner of their worship. They are to wait upon the Lord, to meet in the silence of flesh, and to watch for the stirrings of his life, and the breakings forth of his power amongst them. And, in the breakings forth of that power, they may pray, speak, exhort, rebuke, sing, or mourn, &c. according as the Spirit teaches, requires, and gives utterance. But, if the Spirit do not require to speak, and give to utter, then, every one is to sit still in his place, (in his heavenly place I mean,) feeling his own measure, feeding thereupon, receiving therefrom (into his spirit) what the Lord giveth. Now, in this, is edifying, pure edifying, precious edifying; his soul, who thus waits, is hereby particularly edified

by the Spirit of the Lord at every meeting. And then also, there is the life of the whole felt in every vessel that is turned to its measure; inso-much as the warmth of life in each vessel doth not only warm the particular, but they are like an heap of fresh and living coals, warming one another, insomuch as a great strength, freshness, and vigour of life flows into all. And if any be burdened, tempted, buffeted by Satan, bowed down, overborne, languishing, afflicted, distressed, &c. the estate of such is felt in Spirit, and secret cries, (or open, as the Lord pleaseth,) ascend up to the Lord for them; and they many times find ease and relief, in a few words spoken, or without words, if it be the season of their help and relief with the Lord.

For, absolutely silent meetings, wherein there is a resolution not to speak, we know not; but we wait on the Lord, either to feel him in words, or in silence of spirit without words, as he pleaseth. And that which we aim at, and are instructed to by the Spirit of the Lord, as to silent meetings, is, that the flesh in every one be kept silent, and that there be no building up, but in the Spirit and power of the Lord.

Now, there are several states of people: some feel little of the Lord's presence; but feel temptations and thoughts, with many wanderings and roving of mind. These are not yet acquainted with the power, or at least know not its dominion, but rather feel dominion of the evil over the good in them. And this is a sore travailing and mournful state, and meetings to such as these, many times, may seem to themselves rather for the worse than for the better. Yet even these, turning, as



much as may be, from such things, and cleaving, or at least in truth of heart desiring to cleave, to that which disliketh or witnesseth against them, have acceptance with the Lord herein: and, continuing to wait in this trouble and distress, keeping close to meetings, in fear and subjection to the Lord who requireth it, though with little appearing benefit, do reap an hidden benefit at present, and shall reap a more clear and manifest benefit afterwards, as the Lord wasteth and weareth out that in them, wherein the darkness hath its strength. Now, to evidence that the Lord doth require these silent meetings, or meetings after this manner silent, it may thus appear.

God is to be worshipped in spirit, in his own power and life, and this is at his own disposal. His church is a gathering in the Spirit. If any man speak there, he must speak as the oracle of God, as the vessel out of which God speaks, as the trumpet out of which he gives the sound. Therefore, there is to be a waiting in silence, till the Spirit of the Lord move to speak, and also give words to speak. For, a man is not to speak his own words, or in his own wisdom or time; but the Spirit's words, in the Spirit's wisdom and time, which is, when he moves and gives to speak. And seeing the Spirit inwardly nourisheth, when he giveth not to speak words, the inward sense and nourishment is to be waited for and received as it was given when there are no words. Yea, the ministry of the Spirit and life is more close and immediate when without words, than when with words, as has been often felt, and is faithfully testified by many witnesses. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, how and what

things God reveals to his children by his Spirit, when they wait upon him in his pure fear, and worship and converse with him in spirit; for then the fountain of the great deep is unsealed, and the everlasting springs surely give up the pure and living water.—*From the same. Works, vol. iv. p. 57.*

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SOME QUERIES CONCERNING THE STATE OF THE CHURCH AS IT WAS IN THE APOSTLES' DAYS, AND WAS TO BE AFTERWARDS.

1. WAS not the church exceeding beautiful, and in heavenly glory, in the days of the apostles? Did she only travail after life and glory? Did she not also bring forth? Did she not witness the kingdom come, the power come, the eternal life come? And did she not partake thereof, and dwell therein? Was she not a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and crowned with a crown of twelve stars? Yea, did she not bring forth the man-child, which was to rule all nations with a rod of iron? Who can read this state, who is not in some measure a partaker of the same glory?

2. Was not this heaven afterwards wrapped up, rolled up; and did not this glory pass away? Did not the great red dragon fight with the woman? And did she not fly into the wilderness, and was not the man-child caught up to God? And did not the remnant of her seed, who had the testimony of Jesus, and who kept his commandments,

testify and prophesy in sackcloth? Read chap. xi. and xii. of the Revelation.

3. Upon the flight of the true church into the wilderness, when she was thus gone out of sight, did not the false church start up; which made a glorious and taking appearance in the world, to the eye of man's wisdom? Did not she sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast (wise and strong) having seven heads, and ten horns? Was she not arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, making the kings, nations, and inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication? What do those things mean? What did the wisdom of God thus describe her for?

4. What did the true church carry into the wilderness with her, and what did she leave behind her? Did not the temple, the altar, and the true worshippers go along with her? Did not the Gentiles, such as were not true Jews, such as could not come into the temple, (but only into the outward court, and worship there,) did not these stay behind? And had not these Gentiles henceforth (from the true church's flight into the wilderness) the outward court given to them, that they might make use of it, and worship in it, as much as they would? The virtue, the life, the power, the Spirit being taken away and removed with the true church, which fled into the wilderness, what did God regard the outward? Leave it out of my measure, saith the Lord, and give it to the Gentiles, Rev. xi. 2.

5. What is the cup, the golden cup, which this false church hath in her hand, wherein are sorceries and witchcrafts, wherewith she bewitcheth people,

and maketh them drunk? Is it not a glorious appearance of things without the true life and power? Doctrines concerning God, doctrines concerning Christ, doctrines concerning worship, doctrines concerning sanctity, &c. Yea, but the Spirit, the life, the power, that was in the apostles' days, is wanting. What remains of these is to be found with the true church in the wilderness, (the blood of whose seed she drinks,) not with her.

6. What will become of this great woman in the end, this rich, this glorious church? Shall she continue for ever? Shall she sit as a queen for ever, and never see sorrow? Shall the true church never come out of the wilderness, to be restored to her beauty and glory again? Nay, nay; in one day shall her plagues come; death, and mourning, and famine. It is true, she is wise and strong, and the beast also, on which she sits and rides, (who is able to make war with? saith man's wisdom); but wiser and stronger is the Lord God Almighty, who judgeth her, and who is taking and will take to him his great power, wherewith he will thunder against her, until he hath brought her down, and her flesh be utterly burnt with fire.

7. What shall become of those who drink of her cup, and who believe and worship as she teacheth? Shall they not all drink of the wine of the cup of the wrath of God Almighty, poured out without mixture? Shall they not partake of her dreadful plagues, in the hour of her judgment? Read Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11, and chap. xviii. For, these things are to come to pass, as certainly as they were foretold; and when they do come to pass, blessed shall the saints be who have suffered with patience, keeping the commandments and the faith of Jesus;

and woe will be to them, who have persecuted them and drunk their blood. Read chap. xiii. xiv. xvii. and chap. xix. of the Revelation, which signify of and testify to these things.

Now, whereas many say, that the book of the Revelations is such a mystical book, that it is not to be understood ; to what end then was it written ? It was the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, chap. i. 1, and would Christ give them forth in such words as could not be understood ? Again it is said, ver. 3, " Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein ; for the time is at hand." How can any be blessed in reading, or how can any keep what is written therein, without understanding the things contained in it ? How can any follow the true church into the wilderness, or avoid being taken with the golden cup of fornications of the false church, or refuse the mark of the beast, that he take it neither on his forehead nor hand, nor have the name of the beast upon him, nor so much as the number of his name, unless he truly and rightly understand these warnings and descriptions of the Holy Spirit of God, given forth in the book, to preserve in the way of truth, in the way of life, though through great sufferings and tribulations, out of the way of spiritual whoredom and death ? For, mystical Babylon, the nations of the earth and great ones generally commit fornication with, Rev. xvii. 2, and xviii. 3. Indeed, this book is a mystery to man's wisdom ; for, it was not given to the wisdom of this world, but is hid from that ; but God gave it Christ to give to his ser-

vants; and it is not a mystery, but opened and revealed by the Father's Spirit, to the children of the true wisdom, who are instructed and taught of God to escape the bed of whoredom and spiritual fornication, which the earthly wisdom, in the wisest men of this world, is entangled in.—*From "Life and Immortality," &c. 1671. Works, vol. iv. p. 69.*

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OF THE THREEFOLD APPEARANCE OF CHRIST; *to wit, under the Law, in a Body of Flesh, and in his Spirit and Power.*

FIRST, *under the law.* Various were the appearances of Christ; sometimes as an angel, in the likeness of a man; so to Abraham, and so to Jacob, when Jacob wrestled with him, and prevailed, and had overcome; so to Joshua, or the captain of the Lord's host, at his besieging Jericho; so to Moses in the bush, he appeared as an angel, Acts, vii. 35, so likewise in visions. Those glorious appearances of God to the prophets in visions, were the appearances of Christ; as particularly, that glorious appearance of God sitting upon a throne, and his train filling the temple, and the Seraphims crying, "Holy! holy! holy is the Lord of hosts; his glory is the fulness of the whole earth!" Isa. vi. This was an appearance of Christ to Isaiah, as is manifest, John, xii. 41, where the Evangelist, referring to that place, useth this expression: "These things, said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." So, he was the angel of God's presence, which went before the Jews, in all their journeyings and travels out of Egypt, through

the sea, and in the wilderness, and in the time of the judges : and wrought all their deliverances for them, as is signified, Isa. lxiii. 9. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them," &c. So, with the three children, he appeared in the midst of the fiery furnace "in a form like the Son of God," as Nebuchadnezzar judged, Dan. iii. 25.

Now indeed, the whole law was a shadow of him, who was to come to be the substance of it, and to perform that inwardly in the hearts of his, which the law figured forth, and represented outwardly. Thus, Moses and all the prophets were forerunners of him, the great prophet of the spiritual Israel of God. All the priests, especially the high-priests, were types and forerunners of him, and to end in him, who is the high-priest over the household of God for ever. The judges and saviours were types of him, the great Saviour and Redeemer: for, they saved not by their own strength, but by his Spirit and power coming upon them; so that the yoke (which was made and brought upon them by their rebellion against the Lord, and disobedience to his law) was still broken, because of the anointing.

David, Solomon, and the good kings, were types of him. David, of his conquest over his spiritual enemies; Solomon, of his ruling his Israel in peace, after he had conquered their enemies.

Circumcision was a type of his circumcising the heart, that his children, his holy seed, might love the Lord their God with all their heart, and live.

The passover, and blood of the lamb, was a type of his blood, and sprinkled upon the conscience, which preserveth against the stroke and power of

the destroyer ; and so, God passeth over all such, when he visits for sin and transgression.

The outward sabbath was a type of the pure rest, which Christ gives to those that believe in his name : for indeed, they that truly believe in him do enter into rest, and cease from their own labour and workings of themselves, and witness God's working in them, "both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The outward law, in the letter, written in tables of stone, was a shadow of the inward, living, pure, powerful, spiritual law of love and life, which God writes in the hearts of his children, which constrains them to obedience, and enables them to do all that God requires of them with ease and delight. For truly, the yoke of his law is easy, and the burden of his commandments is light ; so that they are not at all grievous to them that are under, and in subjection to his Spirit.

When the mind is gathered, and brought from under the spirit and power of darkness into his Spirit and power, oh ! how easy is it to believe, to love, to obey, &c. ? Indeed, there is nothing but love, and faith, and obedience, and life, and righteousness, and holiness, and pure power, and peace, and joy here. "For the old things are passed away, and all things are become new in Christ," to them that are in the new creation in him.

So Canaan, the Holy Land, represented the land of life, or country of life, into which God gathers, and in which he feeds and preserves all the living, whom he gathers out of the territories of death and darkness. And the plenty and fulness of the land of Canaan, and the sweet rivers therein, signified the



abundance of rich things, and the rivers of God's pleasure, whereof his redeemed ones drink, as they come to live, and dwell, and walk, and sup in and with him.

Jerusalem, the holy city, was a figure of the new Jerusalem, the spiritual Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the mother of all them that are born of the Spirit; and the hill whereon Jerusalem was built, signified God's holy mountain, whereon this his city is built: and the inhabitants of the outward Jerusalem signified the inhabitants of the new and inward Jerusalem; and the temple signified Christ's body, and the bodies of the saints, which are temples, in the midst of which the Holy One dwells. And that altar in the outward temple signified the altar in this inward temple, which all the true, inward, spiritual Jews have right to partake of, and none else. The fire in the outward temple, and the candlesticks, and the lights which were never to go out, signified the holy fire in the spiritual temple, which comes from heaven, wherewith all the spiritual sacrifices are to be offered up; and the candlestick is to hold the light (and the priests to keep the lamps burning) or God will remove it out of its place. So the holy garments of the priests signified the robes of righteousness, innocency, and purity, wherewith the people of God under the gospel, who are a royal priesthood to him, are to be clothed.

And the ark signified that which holds the law of the new covenant; and the pot of manna, with which kind of food God fed and nourished the soul in the wilderness, before he brought it into the Holy Land, must be for an everlasting memorial in the land of the living. For indeed, Christ

appeared to and was with that people in the wilderness, in a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; which signified the leadings of God's Spirit in the day of the gospel, Isa. iv. 5. And he was the rock that followed them; and he was the manna of which they did eat, and the water of which they did drink; for they did eat and drink of the heavenly things in a figure, and (as their spirits were at any time opened) had a taste and sense of the true food, in and through the figure; yea, doubtless, at some times, they had all some sense, and did all eat of the same spiritual meat as we now eat of, "and did all drink of the same spiritual drink" as we now drink of, 1 Cor. x. 3. 4. for they were not only all under the cloud, and did not only all pass through the sea, but they were also all baptized in the cloud and in the sea, having a sense of the pure power of the Lord, and of his outstretched arm made bare for them; in which sense they sang his praise, though they soon afterwards forgot his works, Psalm cvi. 12, 13. So likewise there was Aaron's rod, that budded, laid up in the ark; which is the evidence of true priesthood and ministry for ever; and that which is so, is not to be spurned against, but still to be acknowledged and honoured, as of God.

In it also were the tables of the law, in the representative ark; in the true ark are the tables of the law of life, which God writes by the finger of his Spirit, and appoints to be kept in the spiritual ark for ever.

Above the ark was the mercy-seat, with two cherubims of glory, one at each end of it, spreading their wings on high over the mercy-seat between whom God dwelt or sat, where God met

with and communed with Moses, and the priests under the law, when they came to worship him, and inquire of him; which figured out the true mercy-seat under the gospel, where the true priests (the true circumcision of the spiritual Israel of God) have access with boldness to the throne of grace, that, through the high priest of their profession, they may obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need.

So, under the law, all the sacrifices (the sin-offering, the peace-offering, the thank-offering, the heave-offering, the wave-offering, the whole burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the drink-offering, &c.) signified Christ, the one offering, who comprehends them all; and the holy, spiritual, heavenly offerings, which the spiritual people, the priests of the gospel, are daily to offer up to God: and the sweet spices, frankincense, and odours, signified the sweet seasonings of the gospel sacrifices with grace, with salt, with the Spirit, with the fresh breathings of life, with innocency, with meekness, with tenderness, with zeal, with faith, with love, &c. which yields a most pleasant scent in the nostrils of the Lord.

Now, in the bullock and goat for the sin-offering, the blood was to be brought into the holy place, to make atonement; and the fat and inwards burnt on the altar; and the flesh, skin, and dung, carried forth and burnt without the camp. What means this? Oh! how precious is it to read the figures of the heavenly things with true understanding! but to read through the figures (with the eye of life, with the eye of the Spirit) into the invisible substance, this is sweet, precious, and heavenly indeed!

Secondly, *Concerning Christ's appearance in a body of flesh.* When the time of these shadows drew towards an end, and the fulness of time was come, he who thus appeared in several types and shadows among that people of the Jews under the law, he now came down from the Father, debased himself, and clothed himself like a man, partaking of flesh and blood; and was in all things made like unto us (excepting sin; for he was the Lamb without spot) humbling himself to come under the law, and under the curse, that he might redeem those that are under the law, and under the curse, by fulfilling the righteousness thereof, and bringing them through into the righteousness everlasting.

Now, while he was in the body, his glory did shine to the eye of the children of the true wisdom: his disciples (to whom not flesh and blood, nor the wisdom and knowledge which they could get from the letter, but his Father revealed him) they saw the hidden glory; they saw through the veil of his flesh, and beheld him as the only begotten of his Father, full of grace and truth.

Now, in this body he finished the work which his Father gave him to do; he fulfilled all righteousness (the righteousness of the letter, the righteousness of the Spirit) that he might bring *his* through the righteousness of the law or letter, into the righteousness of the Spirit and power, into the righteousness of the new life; and here that Scripture is read and fulfilled, "*I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God.*" So, his whole life was a doing the will of the Father, which sent him.

When he was but twelve years old, he disputed

with the doctors and teachers of the law, hearing and asking them questions (discovering the pure wisdom of the Father which dwelt in him) because it was his Father's business which he was to be about, as he told his mother, Luke, ii. 49. And when the Lord led him into the wilderness to be tried, he went and was tempted, that he might fight the battle against his great adversary. And when the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, moving him to preach the gospel, he preached the gospel in the Spirit and power of the Father, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, as his Father's Spirit led and guided him: for he did nothing of himself, or in his own will, or for himself; but all in the will and time of the Father.

“*Mine hour is not yet come,*” said he to his mother, when she was hasty to have him do that miracle of turning water into wine, John, ii. 4. And so when his brethren urged him to go up to the feast, John, vii. 3, 4. “*My time,*” said he, “*is not yet come; your time is always ready,*” ver. 6.

Thus, he did always please his Father, and seek the honour of him that sent him; and was obedient to death, even the death of the cross, being willing to drink of the cup which his Father gave him to drink; and so, having finished his work, he returned from whence he came, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, being exalted above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, both in this world, and in that which is to come.

Thirdly, Now the third appearance of Christ, which these two outward appearances made way for, was his appearance *in Spirit*, even his pure,

inward, heavenly appearance in the hearts of his children. This he bids his disciples wait for; telling them, that *he would not leave them comfortless, but would come again to them.* They had had the appearance of the bridegroom in the flesh, and he was to go away. It could not be helped; it was necessary for them that he should go away; but, saith he, "I will come again." The same power and presence that is now with you in a body of flesh shall visit you in Spirit, and so abide with you for ever. For, he that is now with you, shall be in you; till that time, ye shall have sorrow, and be like a travailing woman; but the world in the mean time shall rejoice; "but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man takes from you." And was it not so? Did not Christ send the Spirit, the Comforter? Did he not come in the Spirit and the power of the Most High, to be with them always to the *end of the world*? Did he not bid them "stay and wait at Jerusalem" for that appearance of him in his Spirit, and not go about his work and message till he came in the power and authority of his Father to go along with them? And did not their hearts rejoice, when he came, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory? Had they not then, the joy and peace which passed all the understanding of man; which *joy and peace none could take from them*; which joy, they were not promised that they should receive, till he came and saw them again? Yea, truly; in the kingdom, Spirit, and power of our Lord Jesus Christ there is a *seeing eye to eye.* Yea, it was so, in some measure, with some precious ones in the days of old, which that promise, Psalm xxxii.

8, "I will guide thee with mine eye," intimates; for the eye of the soul must be upon God's eye, and observe the motion thereof, if it be guided thereby.

And truly this administration of the Spirit and power of the gospel is exceeding glorious, and they that come into it, come into the glory and heavenly dominion and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, (and so are made kings by him, and wear crowns in his presence, though they still cast them at his feet,) and are changed from glory to glory; and behold, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, which none can do but with the eye which is in some measure changed and glorified.

Now, this dispensation of the gospel in Spirit and power, began in the apostles' days, and the church was exceeding chaste, pure, and beautiful then, without spot or wrinkle; though there were some crept into the outward court which were spots among them; but that did not mar the beauty of the rest, but they could bring victory and dominion to him that sat on the throne, and witnessed that salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ was come. For the man-child was born, and was among them; and the glorious woman, the church, the spouse of Christ, "was clothed with the sun," &c. and had both her husband, her Lord and head, and the man-child (the pure birth of life) with her. But there was a falling away after this, and a thick dark night, and a very great and universal apostasy from the Spirit and power of the apostles; many departing out of the fear into the high-mindedness, and not keeping their standing in the faith, and love, and obedience of the truth; but holding a form of godliness out of the power.

But God, in his tender mercies, determined to send an angel to preach his everlasting gospel again; and in due time so did, as is expressed, Rev. xiv. 6, 7. (Mark: none could preach the everlasting gospel after the apostasy, by any ordination or succession of ministry left amongst men; but there must be a new receiving of the gospel, by a new message and commission from on high.) And God likewise sent forth his Spirit of judgment and burning to consume the whore, the false church, which was grown very great, sitting over peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues; and to bring the true church out of the wilderness into enjoyment of her beauty and glory again. And when she comes again, she comes as a morning without clouds, without any veil, without any outward types or shadows of the glory to be revealed, even in the pure and heavenly glory itself.

He that hath a true eye, let him read this; and he that hath an heart opened by the Lord, let him acknowledge it: for, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is exalted, and the knees of his redeemed ones bow to him, and acknowledge him the only Anointed One, the only Lord and King over all, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.—*From the same. Works, vol. iv. p. 94.*

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SOME OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST, *from several passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews.*

Obs. 1. Who is the apostle and high priest of our profession? It is Jesus Christ, the Son of



God, whom God hath appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds; and who is the express image of his Father's substance, &c. Heb. i. and iii. 1.

*Obs. 2.* Why was this high priest to suffer death? that he might taste death for every man, and so through suffering become a perfect Saviour, or perfect Captain of salvation, to all the sons that were to be brought by him to glory, ii. 9, 10.

*Obs. 3.* Why he partook of flesh and blood? one reason was, because the children (and that therein he might show them an example of righteousness, that he might condemn himself in the flesh,) were partakers of flesh and blood; for that was the very ground or reason that he took part of the same: another reason was that which was mentioned before, that he might taste death, and through death destroy him who had the power of death, and so break open the prison-doors, and deliver those who were captives under him, ii. 14, 15.

*Obs. 4.* Why he was tempted; and why in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren? which was, "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." For his own suffering under temptations, even the sense thereof, renders him merciful, tender, faithful, and ready to help and succour his in all their temptations, ii. 17, 18.

Mark; Christ was not only to die, and so offer up a sacrifice of atonement, but he was also to make reconciliation by it ever afterwards for his children in case of transgression whenever occasion should be. So saith John, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father" (to plead for

the forgiving and blotting out of the sin ;) “ and he is the propitiation” or reconciliation “ for our sins ;” as the old translation renders it, 1 John, ii. 1, 2.

*Obs. 5.* Christ our apostle and high priest, is as faithful over all his house, as Moses was over his. There is not one of the children, not one of his family, but he will teach : not one soul belonging to him, but he will succour, being tempted ; nor any one, but he will be an advocate and reconciliation for in case of sin, in and according to the way that God hath appointed, Heb. iii. 2.

*Obs. 6.* Who are Christ’s house ? over whom is he an apostle and high priest ? It is over his own house ; whose house are all such as are called by him, if they receive and hold fast that which gives a right to him, and interest in him, iii. 6, and ver. 14. For as under the law, the high priest was priest only over the outward Israel, the Jews natural ; so under the gospel, Christ is appointed of God high priest over the inward Jews, the Jews spiritual.

*Obs. 7.* How this apostle or high priest of our profession doth work in the hearts of his family or household ? which is by the Word of Life, by the Word of his own eternal power, which pierceth deep, and divideth between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, discerning and judging every thought and intent, and bringing every high reasoning and imagination into captivity, that the heart, soul, mind, and spirit, with all the thoughts and intents thereof, may become subject to his Spirit and power, iv. 12.

*Obs. 8.* What an advantage we have, by having such an high priest, as was tempted like us, and touched with the sense of our infirmities, of coming boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need !

For he who experimentally knew what the weakness of our flesh is, and what it was to be tempted therein, and how needful and seasonable help from his Father then was; surely he cannot but be ready to give out, and multiply grace and mercy to his in the time of their need, iv. 15, 16.

*Obs. 9.* How Christ came to be an high priest? which was not by his own taking the honour to himself, but by God's glorifying him with the call thereto, v. 4, 5.

*Obs. 10.* How God fitted Christ, and made him a perfect high priest? which was by preparing for him a body of flesh, and exercising him in the days of his flesh with many trials and temptations; and at last with a bitter baptism, and cup of death, in which he felt and bare the griefs and sorrows of his people, and cried mightily to his Father, and was heard in that he feared: and so having himself perfectly learned obedience to his Father, he knows how to become the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him. For Christ, who was heard and saved from death in his obedience to his Father, is appointed to be the leader and Saviour of his people, to save and redeem them in their obedience unto him, the leader into, and in the way and paths of life, v. 7, 8, 9.

*Obs. 11.* Where Christ mediates for his people? which is within the veil, in the heavenly place, in the holiest of all, where the anchor of our hope reacheth to him and fasteneth upon him, and there remains sure and steadfast; so that we are stayed upon him, the rock of life and power, against all the storms and tempests of the powers of darkness, both inward and outward, vi. 19, 20.

*Obs. 12.* After what order Christ was made an high priest; which was after the order of Mel-

chizedeck, who was king of righteousness, and king of peace, even after an holy and heavenly order: not after the order of the earthly priesthood, the high priests whereof were taken from amongst men, but after his order who was made mention of; without father, without mother, without descent (for who can declare his generation?) without beginning of days or end of life, vii. 1, 2, 3, and 15.

*Obs.* 13. That this priest put an end to and changed the laws of the other earthly, shadowy priesthood of Levi, by which perfection was not, that he might bring in that priesthood of his own, by which perfection was to be, vii. 11, &c.

*Obs.* 14. How Christ was made priest after a different manner from the priests of the law: for they were made priests after the law of a carnal commandment; but Christ was not priest so, but after the power of an endless life, vii. 16.

*Obs.* 15. That the work of Christ's priesthood continueth until it be finished; that is, till this high priest hath saved all he is to save, which is thus: as in all ages the Father draweth souls to him, so he is to save them; to destroy their enemies, to blot out their sins, to break down what stands between God and them, and so to bring them into the true oneness; for God will never be reconciled to his enemy the devil, nor to man while in union with him, vii. 24, 25.

*Obs.* 16. That this high priest needeth not to offer many sacrifices to atone by, as the priests under the law needed to do often: for he was a perfect priest, and offered up one perfect, spotless sacrifice; and is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, vii. 27, 28.

*Obs.* 17. What sanctuary is Christ the high

priest and minister of ? which is, of that sanctuary and true tabernacle which the Lord pitcheth, and not man, viii. 2.

*Obs.* 18. What hath he to offer ? for every high priest was ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices. He hath the heavenly gifts and sacrifices to offer ; even all the gifts and spiritual sacrifices that are revived and brought forth by him in the holy place, even in his temple or spiritual house within the veil ; he is to offer them all up to his Father, ver. 3, &c.

*Obs.* 19. What covenant is he mediator of ? even a better covenant than the priests under the law were mediators of, which is established upon better promises : a covenant, wherein there is no defectiveness or imperfection, wherein all shall certainly be redeemed and saved by him, who come to him in the drawing of the Father, and abide with him. For in such, God will put his laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts ; and “ will be their God, and they shall be his people ; ” and will so teach them, that they shall need no other teacher ; but shall all know him from the least to the greatest. For as men come into this covenant, God will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will he remember no more, ver. 6, to the end.

*Obs.* 20. That Christ is not an high priest of the figures of things, but of the good things themselves, (which came in the time of reformation) even of the perfect covenant, the perfect tabernacle, and of the worship and service in Spirit and in truth ; where the perfect refiner by his Spirit of judgment and burning purifieth the sons of Levi, that they may offer to God an offering in righteousness, ix. 9, 10, 11 ; and Mal. iii. 3.

So that there is a different state witnessed by the people of God in this covenant, from what was witnessed by the Jews in the other covenant: for what was amiss there, is reformed here by the Spirit and power of our God, in all those that abide and walk in this covenant; who live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, and do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, which grieve and provoke God's Holy Spirit.

*Obs. 21.* How Christ came to obtain eternal redemption for all his? which was by his blood. For as the high priest under the law entered into the holy place of that tabernacle made with hands, by the blood of goats and calves, and so obtained remission for the sins of that outward people the Jews; so Christ entered into the truly holy place, into the greater and more perfect tabernacle, and there by his blood obtained remission for all that should receive repentance from him, and believe in him, ix. 11, 12.

*Obs. 22.* How Christ purifieth, purgeth, and sanctifieth the people with his blood? which is, by sprinkling it upon them. For under the law, in that outward covenant, the unclean were sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice, that they might be sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; and under the gospel, in this inward covenant, believers are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, that their consciences might be purged from dead works to serve the living God, as his cleansed, holy, renewed people, ver. 13, 14.

*Obs. 23.* For what cause Christ was mediator of the new testament? which was, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressors under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance, ver. 15.

For God hath made Christ a propitiation for all men, both Jews and Gentiles, that through faith in his blood, his righteousness might be declared for remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, that he might be just, and a justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus, Rom. iii. 25, 26. So that they that were under the first covenant, hearkening unto him, and believing in him, were justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, Acts, xiii. 39.

*Obs. 24.* The necessity of Christ's death, which was, because he was to make way by his own blood into the holiest, to appear before God for us ; and to sprinkle the heavenly things with the blood of a sacrifice, of an higher and better nature than the blood of bulls and goats was ; for that was the blood of the covenant, which was to pass away, but he was to sprinkle his with the blood of the everlasting covenant ; and by this his death and blood (sprinkled upon the hearts of his) his covenant comes to be of force, ix. 16 to 25, and xiii. 20, 21.

*Obs. 25.* That this high priest need not often offer sacrifices to put away sin, as the priests of the law did ; because this one offering is sufficient, and the blood thereof sprinkled upon the conscience, is able to purge away dead works, wherever it is sprinkled. There needeth not any other offering, nor any other blood to do it ; but all that is now further needed, or to be expected by *his*, is his appearing the *second* time, without sin, unto salvation, in the pure virtue, power, and life of his own Spirit, ver. 25, to the end.

*Obs. 26.* What it was, that was the thing of

great value with the Father, in Christ giving up himself to death? It was his obedience. He did obey his Father in all things, not doing his own will, but the will of him that sent him. "He was obedient to death, even the death of the cross:" and so, as by one man's disobedience, death came upon all; so by the obedience of *one*, the free gift came upon all, which free gift is unto life; for life comes upon all that come to him, and believe in him, through the free gift, which is freely tendered to, and come upon all, Rom. v. 18, 19.

*Obs. 27.* That God took away sacrifices, and burnt-offerings, which were appointed by the old covenant, that he might establish this obedience among all his children. Christ led the way, and all are to follow him in the new obedience, and to walk in newness of spirit before the Lord, Heb. x. 9.

*Obs. 28.* That we are sanctified by the same will, by which Christ was sanctified, or sanctifieth himself. In subjection to the same will, which the head obeyed (even in denying themselves, taking up the cross to their own wills, and submitting to God's) are the members sanctified. The Spirit of God works them into holiness by this will of God, and through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once, x. 10; John, xvii. 19.

So mark: there is the will of God, the offering up the body of Jesus, the pouring out the Spirit of grace, the new covenant, and faith in Christ, &c. All these tend to work out one and the same thing, and they all concur thereto, in their several orders and places.

*Obs. 29.* That as this high priest sanctifies men, so he perfects them; and when they are fully sanctified, then they are for ever perfected; but till



then, Christ, the high-priest of our profession, hath somewhat to do upon them towards the perfecting of them, that he may present them spotless, and blameless to his Father, Heb. x. 14, 15.

*Obs. 30.* How the apostle proves, "That by this one offering, Christ hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified." He proves it thus: by this offering the covenant is established, wherein is the putting and writing God's law in the heart and mind, the remission of sins.

So, come into this covenant, come under this high priest: there is no more remembering of sin there, but perfect forgiveness through this one offering, and so no more need of any more sacrificing or offering for sins to such, ver. 15—19. For "he shall sprinkle many nations" with the blood of this one offering, Isa. lii. 15.

*Obs. 31.* The great privilege of those, who do indeed believe in Christ, and are sprinkled with the blood, and how they are to improve and make use of that privilege.

First, they have liberty, confidence, or boldness, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x. 19. What is more holy than God's Spirit? Is not that the most holy place? Why, there *they* are to worship; for they that worship the Father in the new covenant, or according to the new covenant, must worship him in the Spirit, and in the truth; yea, and must also live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, which is the place of everlasting rest, and the land of the living.

Secondly, Take notice how they come into the holiest, which is by the new and living way, which Christ hath prepared, or consecrated through his flesh, ver. 20.

Thirdly, They have an high priest there over the

house of God, who appears before God in the holiest, and stands ready there to perform all the offices of priesthood for his household, ver. 21.

Fourthly, There is an orderly way of drawing nigh to God, and worshipping him in the holiest. There is a certain manner, after which believers are to approach, and draw nigh to God ; which is,  
 1. With a true heart. 2. In fulness of faith, or in full assurance of faith ; not waveringly, but as those that are called of God, and shall be helped by him, and accepted of him through their high priest.  
 3. In purity of conscience and conversation, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water, ver. 22, 23, and Psal. xxvi. 6. "I will wash mine hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altars, O Lord." "Christ came by water and blood;" so here is both the water and the blood, according to the figures thereof, under the law.

*Obs.* 32. Whither they came in the apostles' days, who knew Christ as their high priest and mediator, and who partook of the blood of sprinkling? They came to spiritual Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, Heb. xii. 22.

Observe likewise where they walked, who felt the virtue of Christ's blood cleansing them; which was "in the light, as God is in the light," 1 John, i. 7.

Now, what light is that which the redeemed are to walk in? Is it not the light of the Lamb's city, the New Jerusalem? Is it not the light thereof, that the nations of them that are saved must walk in? Rev. xxi. 24. Yea, this light, this city, and the holy waters of the sanctuary, which flow and stream from the river of life there, were in measure

known and experienced in the days of old, which David prayed for, and experienced a sense of, Psal. xliii. 3, and xlvi. 4. Yea, he knew also the blood of the everlasting covenant, praying and waiting to be sprinkled and cleansed therewith, Psal. li. For he looked through the outward figure, to what his soul needed to purge and wash it inwardly; which outward hyssop, or outward water of purification, he knew would not do: for he that saw through the outward sacrifices, to the inward, could not choose but see through these also.

But that power, virtue, and life of God's Spirit, which could "create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit in him," and bring him into God's presence, where he might feel the upholdings of his free Spirit, and partake of the joy of God's salvation and deliverance from that which had defiled him; this was it he prayed for; knowing assuredly, he should here meet with the true hyssop, and water of life, and blood of the covenant, which purgeth the heart and conscience from dead works, and maketh it whiter than the snow in God's sight, ver. 10, 11, 12. For he that delighted not in sacrifice, nor burnt-offerings, neither could he delight in hyssop, or water, or blood, outward or natural; but in that which melteth the heart, and purifieth the conscience, from that which is dead and unclean, in that is God's delight; and in that which is melted, broken, and purified by it, ver. 16, 17.

*Obs.* Lastly, That there is a sin unto death, a kind of sinning for which there is no sacrifice, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, to destroy and devour the adversaries, Heb. x. 26, 27, which is a wilful despising this covenant; which he that doth, must die without mercy

as he that despised Moses' law did, ver. 28, 29. For the Lord will revenge this sin, wheresoever he finds it; and such shall know, that it is a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," when he comes to judge them, ver. 30, 31.—*From the same. Works*, vol. iv. p. 121.

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SOME QUERIES CONCERNING KNOWING AND OWNING  
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST TRULY AND ARIGHT,  
*who hath been the only Saviour and Redeemer in  
all Ages and Generations; and there never was,  
and never shall be any other.*

*Query 1.* WHETHER they know or own the Lord Jesus Christ truly and aright, who only know and own him as outwardly described and related of in the Scriptures, but know him not inwardly revealed in their hearts, as the Word and power of eternal life? Or whether they are the true knowers and owners of Christ, who know and own him not only according to a literal description of him in the Scriptures, but also as inwardly revealed by the Father, witnessing him formed in them, and their hearts changed into his holy and heavenly image, by virtue of his inward appearance and operation of his Spirit and power in them?

*Q. 2.* Whether they truly and rightly know the death and resurrection of Christ, who know only the relation of them in the Scriptures, but are not made conformable to his death, nor raised by him in the power of his life? Or whether they are the true and right knowers of his death and resurrection, who are buried with him by the holy baptism

of his Spirit into death, who through the Spirit have mortified the deeds of the body, and witness the holy seed of life raised and living in them, and themselves raised and made alive to God, in and through the power of the Father revealed in them ?

Q. 3. Whether they truly and rightly confess Christ to be the Lord and King, Priest and Prophet of his people, who confess it only from the reading of it to be so in the Scriptures ? Or whether they are not the true and right confessors of Christ's kingly, priestly, and prophetic offices, who witness him exercising them in them ; who witness him overcoming and reigning over sin and death in them ; over whom other lords, even the spirits and powers of darkness, have not dominion now, but Christ only ; and in whom he ministereth as in his temple, offering spiritual gifts and sacrifices to his Father, and who also prophesieth there, opening and revealing the mysteries of his kingdom to them, as he doth to the least babes that are truly begotten and born of his Spirit ?

Q. 4. Do they or can they truly know Christ's voice, who never experienced the Word of life speaking in their hearts ? Where doth the false prophet speak ? Doth he not speak within ? And where doth the true Shepherd speak ? Doth he not speak within also, even in the heart ? And do not the sheep hear, know, and distinguish his voice there ?

Q. 5. Who knoweth the truth as it is in Jesus ? Do any do so, but those that have felt the drawings of the Father ; come unto the Son in the drawings ; and receive life from and abide in him ? Do any know the truth in Jesus, but those that witness virtue, freedom, life, and power, by the truth in

some measure? Doth not that saying and promise of Christ, John, viii. 31, 32, stand firm in every age? "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Q. 6. Who are ingrafted into Christ? Can any one be ingrafted into Him, but as He is inwardly revealed and made known? Yea, is not He in them who are ingrafted into Him, and are not they in Him? Is not he that is truly regenerated, cut off from the old stock within, from the root of bitterness within; and is not he implanted into the new stock within also: insomuch as he sensibly feeleth the pure holy root of life bear him, and the sap thereof springing up in him, causing him to bring forth fruit to God in due season?

Q. 7. Who prayeth in the name of Christ? Doth he who saith these or such-like words in the best seriousness and sensibleness he can, in his own will, "Hear me, O Lord, for Christ's sake: I confess I am unworthy; but I beg of thee in his name who is worthy," &c. or he who prayeth in the child's nature, on the Father's breathing upon him, in the Spirit of the Father which is given him, and in the time and will of the Father? He that doth but sigh or groan in and from the Spirit, doth not that sigh or groan ascend up to the Father in Christ's name? Alas! how outward is men's religion! But the inward streams and current of the true, pure, and heavenly religion they know not.

Q. 8. Who receiveth Christ? Do any, but those who receive and bow to the light of his Spirit inwardly revealed? Can any receive him, but they that hear his knocks and open to him? Do any know the inward voice of the Shepherd, besides the

sheep? And can any receive his voice, and not receive him? And can any who are ignorant of, and refuse his voice, receive him?

Q. 9. Who do truly and rightly believe in Christ? Do any do so, or can any do so, but they who first feel life, from whence the true faith springs? Ah! that all the faith in men were dashed, but what comes from life, unites to life, and abides in life!

Q. 10. Whom doth Christ gather from the barren mountains? Are they not his sheep: his poor, distressed, scattered, wounded, fainting, and almost famished sheep? What are the mountains he gathers them from? Are they not the several dead ways, worships, and gatherings without life? And out of whose mouths doth he rescue them? Is it not out of the mouths of the shepherds that made a prey of them; who fed them not with life, with virtue, with pure living knowledge; but with words, with dreams, with apprehensions of their own, concerning the things of God? And whither doth he lead them? Is it not to his own holy mountain, which is exalted by God, and established over and on top of all those other mountains, where the fresh pastures are, and where the streams of life flow, and run plentifully?

Q. 11. Who are Christ's kindred according to the Spirit? Who is his mother, sister, brother? Are any so, but they that do the will of the Father? And is this obedience a working according to the law, or of the righteousness of the law? Nay; is it not rather of the nature and righteousness of the gospel? Is not that which floweth from him who is righteous, righteous also; even as he is righteous?

Q. 12. To whom doth Christ give power to be-

come sons? Is it not to as many as truly and rightly receive him, and believe in his name? "To as many as received him" of old, "to them he gave power to become the sons of God." Doth he not do so still? What is it, to receive power to become a son? Let the heart that hath received it, answer; for the notionist cannot.

Q. 13. What is the reason, so many who are high in notion and profession, cannot own this precious appearance of the Spirit, power, and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, in this our day, in the hearts of his children, after the long night of darkness, which hath so long covered the earth? Is not this the very reason, even because they do not rightly and truly know either the Father or the Son? Can any see or know him that begets, and with the same eye not see or know him that is begotten of him? Can any love Christ, and not love his brethren? Is not wisdom, in her appearances, justified of her children in this age, as well as formerly?

Q. 14. Are there two Christs, one manifested without, and another revealed within; or is it the same Lord Jesus Christ, who in the days of his flesh appeared outwardly, that was afterwards manifested within as the mystery of life, and hope of glory; who also in this our day is revealed and made known within unto his, by the same eternal Spirit?

Q. 15. He that truly and rightly knoweth the Spirit of Christ, doth he not know Christ also? Even as he that knoweth Christ, must needs know the Father also. Are not the Father and Christ one? Could any one see Christ, even in the days of his flesh, and not see the Father also? (read John, xiv. 9.) So, is not Christ and the Spirit one in



like manner? And are not all that are truly in Christ, begotten by, gathered into, and do they not live and walk in, that one Spirit of his? And do they not there know the things of God as they are, and testify of what they have seen and known? Though they that are out of that Spirit and power, know neither him, nor the testimony of life that comes by him, no more than the Jews knew his appearance outwardly in their day.

*A Query added concerning Imputation.*

*Query.* In what state was Abraham when faith was imputed to him for righteousness? Was he in the ungodly state; in the state of unbelief and disobedience to the Spirit and power of the Lord; or was he in the sense of God's power, in the belief of him who could raise up his son from the dead, and in the performance of obedience unto him, giving up his son at the Lord's command?

And in what state must we be, when we witness faith imputed to us also for righteousness? Must we not be in the sense of the same power, and in the belief of it, and in the obedience of faith? Read Rom. iv. and consider: for the righteousness of the gospel is not imputed in or by the works of the law, but in the obedience of faith.

It is true, God justifieth the ungodly; through faith he makes them just and godly; but doth he justify or accept them in the ungodly state? Doth he not first make a change in them by his power? Doth he not first in some measure purify their hearts by faith?—*From the same. Works, vol. iv. p. 199.*

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ON THE LIGHT DISCOVERING CHRIST.—*An extract.*

—WHEREAS thou sayst, “The light doth not, nor cannot, discover Christ, and his being raised from the dead,” &c. I cannot but say, on the other hand, *What doth discover them but the light?* How came the Scriptures to declare of Christ? Was it not from the Spirit? And is not that same light still with the Spirit, by which the Scriptures were given forth? And can he not give it forth without the letter, where he seeth need of it, and vouchsafeth so to do? But how can the vast unbelieving multitudes of the world experience what the light and Spirit of the Lord can do, being not subject to it, but rebelling against it? Job, xxiv. 13. And why may not men now, by the light of the Spirit, come to know that Christ is come, dead, and risen, as well as these things were known and believed before the Scriptures were written? Yet, if a man should not know the outward death of Christ, and his raising from the outward grave; yet, being in the faith of the power, (which whomsoever it toucheth and draweth to it, it redeems,) *that* gives him a right to all that was done by Christ; for then, he hath union with the thing which saves, and strength from it against that which destroys. Yea, there was a time when the disciples of Christ were in the faith, and yet neither knew nor believed his death and resurrection: yea, Peter, with no small confidence, said, “Lord, this shall not be unto thee,” Matt. xvi. 22.—*From “A Reply to thy Animadversions.”* 1667. *Works*, vol. iv. p. 239.

CONCERNING THE PERFECTING OF GOD'S WORK IN  
THE HEART.

Is it not the will of God, that his people and children should be sanctified throughout, in soul, in body, in spirit ?

Is it not the will of Christ, that his disciples should be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect ?

Did he not bid them pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven?" And would he never have them believe and expect that it should be done in earth as it is in heaven ?

Doth not he who hath the true, pure, living hope, (which anchors within the veil,) purify himself, even as He is pure ?

Is not this the way to enjoy the promises of God's holy presence, (who tabernacleth in his people that are cleansed and sanctified,) to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear ? Will God dwell in an unholy temple ? Will he dwell where sin dwells ? He may indeed so, when at any time they are tender and truly melted before him, be to them as a wayfaring man that tarries for a night ; but he will not take up his abode there, walk there, sup there, and give them to sup with him.

Hath not Christ received all power both in heaven and earth from his Father ? Is not this the end of receiving his power, to bring down the soul's enemies, and to purify and sanctify his church, that it may be without spot, or wrinkle, or any

such thing? Is he not the Captain of our salvation, anointed to fight the battles of the Lord? Where is the fight? Where is the strong man to be found, cast out, his goods spoiled, and the house emptied of him, and all that belongs to him? Is not Christ the author of faith, the finisher of faith; and doth not he carry on the work of faith with power? And what is the work of faith? Is it not to fight with and overcome sin; to be too hard for the enemy at all his weapons? Is there not a whole armour of light, life, and salvation prepared? What is it prepared for? Is it not that the children of light should be wholly armed with it? Were there never any wholly armed with it; or can the enemy prevail on those that are wholly armed with it? Are those that are armed with it afraid of the enemy, his power, his snares, his wiles? Or are they bold in the faith, following on, in the spiritual battles, him who rideth before them, conquering and to conquer?

O that men's eyes were opened by the Lord! then might they see the glory of truth, in the pure light which shines from God's holy mountain; and such dark doctrines of the night, which tend to the dishonour of Christ, his power, and love, and to the upholding of the enemy's kingdom, would pass away, and prevail no more in the hearts of any that truly fear the Lord; but they would quietly wait and hope for his salvation, that by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, they might be made free from the law of sin and death, and not always be subject thereto! For, all whom the Son maketh free, they are free indeed; and being made free by him, may serve God in freedom of spirit, without fear, in holiness and righteousness

before him, all the days of their lives. And then they know the power and virtue of the new covenant, and the defence which is thereby, where the wing of the Almighty overshadows, and his salvation (revealed therein) is experienced for a sufficient wall and bulwark against the enemy.—*From “A few Experiences,” &c. 1671. Works, vol. iv. p. 258.*

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CONCERNING GOD'S GATHERING US HOME TO HIMSELF, WHO ARE A PEOPLE DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN, AND IN SCORN BY THEM CALLED QUAKERS.

IT pleased the Lord, who is rich in mercy and goodness, to pity our wanderings and sore distresses, and at length to gather us home to the light and Spirit of his Son, which was the gospel-standard in the apostles' days.

Now, that by which God gathered us was the power of Christ, and the preaching of the everlasting gospel by the ministry which he hath raised up in these latter days. For, as the Lord raised up a ministry to preach it at first, when he had some of the Jews and many of the Gentiles to gather; so, he hath raised up a ministry to preach it again after the apostasy, that he may cause the sound thereof to go through all nations. And this ministry hath been raised to go forth in the same virtue, power, and Spirit wherein the foregoing ministry was sent.

God promised of old, that he would seek after,

search out, and gather home, his scattered sheep himself, and become their Shepherd, Ezek. xxxiv. Now, this was fulfilled in a great measure in the days of Christ and his apostles, when Christ came himself, and also sent his apostles after him, to seek and gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and not only so, but also to preach the gospel to all nations, that he might be God's salvation to the ends of the earth, gathering and saving lost and scattered souls out of every quarter and corner thereof.

But afterwards, after the spreading of the gospel, and Christ's gathering of many thereby, there was a great apostasy, and scattering from this holy standard of life and salvation, and darkness overspread the nations again, and an antichristian reign and kingdom got up, under a form and forms of godliness, without the life and power; in which forms people generally have been scattered from the life and power, which indeed is the gospel.

Now, in this cloudy and dark time, great hath been the loss and distress of the poor hungry sheep; their shepherds and watchmen not being able to preach the gospel distinctly to them, and direct their minds to the Spirit and power which saves: therefore God, in pity to this sad and lost condition of his sheep, sends his angel to preach his everlasting gospel to "them that dwell on the earth; to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people," Rev. xiv. 6.

Now, as the former publishing of the gospel began at the scattered Jews, who were God's people under the law; so, this begins at the scattered Christians, who had some true desires, and had been seeking after the Lord, from mountain to

hill, and hill to mountain, but could by no means find him; nor by any of the watchmen hear any certain news of their souls' beloved. But the Lord, in his tender love and rich mercy, in the appointed time, sends forth the Shepherd of Israel to seek and find them out. And, blessed be the Lord! he sought them effectually, and hath found out many, and persuaded them to follow him; and hath brought their weary souls home to their proper resting-place, where they dwell under the care of the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

But, if any shall yet further inquire, *How, and by whom, the gospel was preached unto us?* My answer is, *By the Shepherd himself.* God himself gave forth the sound, and great hath been the company of them that published it; and our ears and hearts were opened by the Lord to hear the sound, and know the Shepherd's voice.

And mind my words, which the Spirit of the Lord is now uttering forth through me; for they are words of truth, and certain understanding. They that do not hear and own the sound thereof now, (from this ministry which the Lord hath now chosen, and sent forth,) would not have heard nor owned the sound thereof in Christ's and his apostles' days, had they lived therein; but have reproached and opposed them, had they lived then in those days, as they do now in these days. For, of a truth, it is the voice and sound of one and the same Spirit and wisdom; and they that do despise the one, would have despised the other, had they lived in the day of the appearance and manifestation thereof.

And then, for the manner of its preaching, it was just such as is described, ver. 7, of Rev. xiv. For

we are commanded to "fear God, and give glory to him, because the hour of his judgment" (the great and terrible day of the Lord) "was come;" and therefore to leave off all false ways and worships, and learn to worship the living God, the Creator of all, in Spirit and in truth. And truly it was a terrible day to the man of sin in us; for the judgments of God were revealed against him, and we in fear lay under the judgment, that we might learn righteousness, and witness the redemption of Zion thereby.

Now, being thus turned to that light, and Spirit, and power, which judgeth, it wrought effectually in us, against the darkness and power of Satan; searching, trying, manifesting, judging the secrets of our hearts daily. It tried all our knowledge, all our faith, all our desires, all our thoughts, words, ways, and worships; so that all things were naked and open before him with whom we had to do; and what had gone before, as glorious and taking in our eyes, was now manifested to be loathsome and abominable in the sight of God. For indeed, the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and every plant which the heavenly Father had not planted was he now plucking up, that they might no longer cumber the ground; but he might have room for his own seeds and plants of holiness and righteousness, which he was ready to sow in his own garden.

And so, at length we came to witness (abiding the trial of this dreadful day, wherein our God appeared to us as a consuming fire) a new heaven and a new earth inwardly; and no more sea of wickedness, no more sea of inward trouble; but righteousness, peace, and joy inwardly; and our



God becoming a rich portion to us, watching over us in most tender care and love, and delighting in us to do us good, making known to us the riches of the gospel, even the feast of fat things; and giving us to partake of the well or fountain of living waters in our own hearts, which springs up freshly in us daily unto life eternal. So that, we were not only invited to the waters, but taught also to come thereto: and when we came, we were not sent away empty, but had the water of life given us; which became such a well, as out of it flow streams of living water. Ah! blessed be the Lord! Did we ever think, in our dry, dead, barren estate, to have seen such a day as this?

And all this we met with in the way of self-denial, and taking up the cross; in denying our own wisdom, our own knowledge, our own faith, our own righteousness, and all that we could call our own; and owning a little seed of light and life eternal, even the seed of the everlasting kingdom, which the Shepherd of Israel discovered to us, and helped us to search after, and taught us how to find; which was indeed in a way very despicable, even to the eye of our own wisdom. For thus it was:

We had been long looking out abroad, searching very diligently the Scriptures, and other serious books, for great, full, certain, and undoubted wisdom and knowledge; but now we were directed to turn inward, even thither, where we thought no good was to be found, to mind the appearance of God there, the Spirit of God testifying to us (according to the Scriptures of truth) that the kingdom was within; and there we were directed to search for the least of all seeds, and to mind the

lowest appearance thereof, which was its turning against sin and darkness ; and so, by minding and observing that in us which turned against sin and darkness, we came by degrees to find we had met with the pure, living, eternal Spirit ; and by observing the movings, stirrings, guidings, directions, and law thereof, we found, *ere we were aware*, that we had met with the law of the new covenant, the law of the Spirit of life, which had life and virtue in it, to enable us to do the holy will ; and then our hearts rejoiced, being made truly sensible, that we had found that which *we* had mourned after and longed for all our days. And then, we began to see our way more clearly, and to wait on our God for his teachings, and to follow the Lamb, our leader, with joy and comfort. For indeed, this experience greatly settled our spirits ; knowing assuredly, that as none but Christ could do those works outwardly which he did in the days of his flesh ; so, none beneath his Spirit could do these works inwardly, enlighten inwardly, enliven inwardly, bind up and heal inwardly, open the inward eye, the inward ear, the closed heart, and loosen the dumb tongue, so, as the touch of his power, and virtue of his life and holy presence among us, hath done very frequently and livingly.

And now, is this testimony nothing to you, O ye professors, that we have found him by God's holy guidance (or rather have been found by him) whom we could never find in your ways and gatherings ? But still, that which God hath quickened in us was there unsatisfied, weary, panting, and gasping, for want of, and after, the breath of life.

O come and see, if this be not he indeed ! Wait to feel the closing of that eye which cannot see,

(which God hath ordained shall never see,) and for his opening the eye which is as yet blind in you, (to which he giveth the true sight,) that ye perish not from the way of life, through mistakes and deceits from the mists of darkness, which are yet over all who have not seen the light of God's day. To the law and to the testimony (to the inward law, and inward testimony, if ye be inward Jews; for the law inwardly written is light, even the light of the living, and the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy;) for he that knoweth not these, nor walketh according to these, nor speaketh according to this Word, it is because there is as yet no morning in him.

O come to the morning light of the everlasting day! Come to the Son's light, to the Son's Spirit! Wait for the dawning of the day of righteousness, love, and peace, and for the arising of the day-star. COME, DIE TO YOUR OWN WISDOM, (it was the word livingly spoken to me, and entered my soul when it was spoken; never departing from me, though I was long in learning it,) and know what it is to suffer with Christ, that ye may also reign with him.

Ah! if that candle were lighted in you, which ye so much reproach and despise the light of, ye might see, that instead of suffering with Christ, that which is of Christ in you (the pure light, the pure life of his Spirit) suffers by you, and the worldly spirit lives (shall I add, and reigns) in you, under all your professions, knowledge, faith, worships, duties, ordinances, as ye call them, who want the knowledge of the everlasting ordinance, even of the Spirit and power of our Lord Jesus Christ; which is the great ordinance and way of the gospel! And

he that is subject to this ordinance shall be saved ; but he that misseth of this shall perish ; let him search the Scriptures ; and practise according to what he apprehends therefrom, as exactly as he can, without this Spirit and power.—*From “ A Treatise concerning God's Teachings,” &c. Works, vol. iv. p. 317.*

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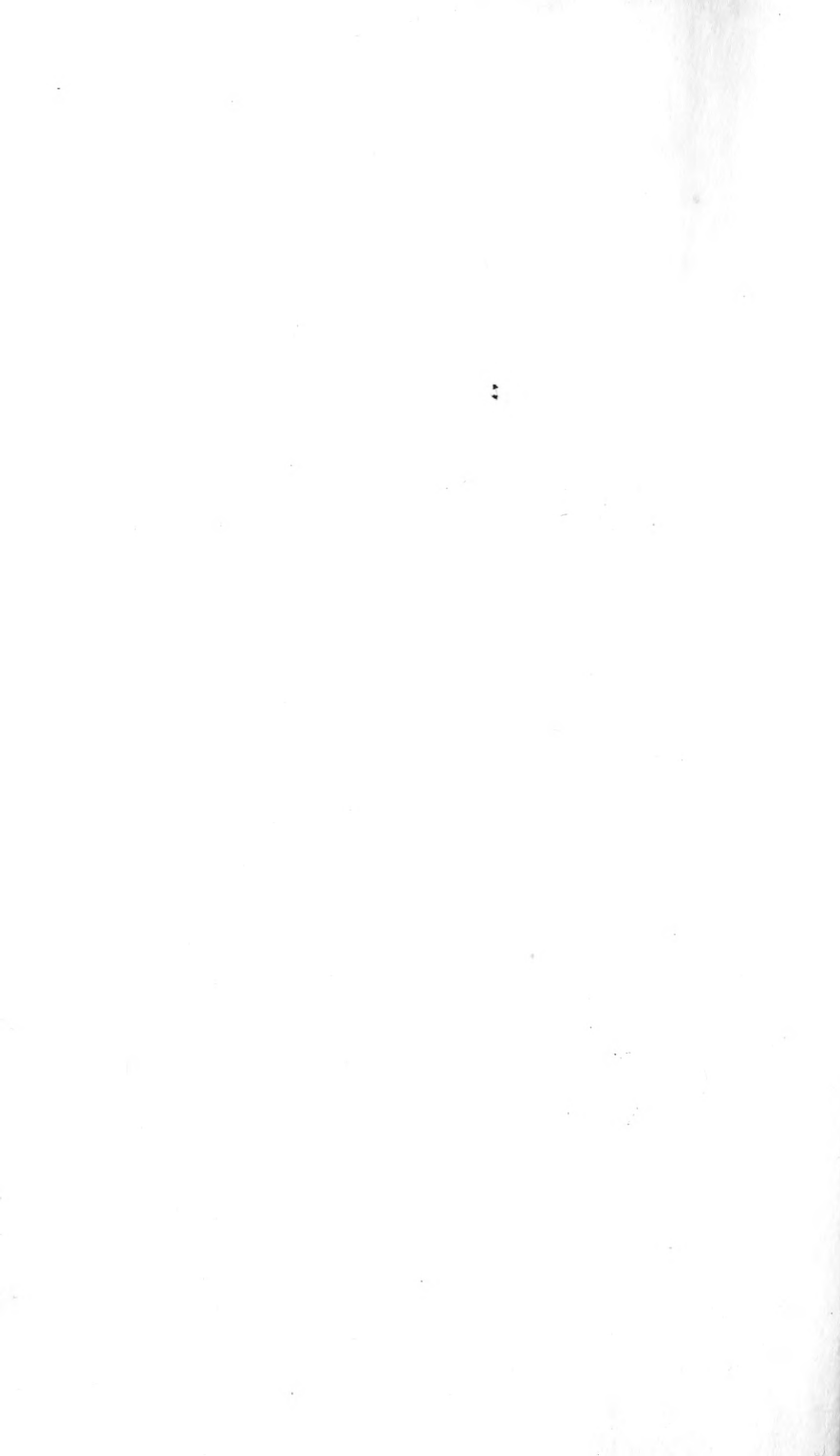
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